Which is the lesser evil?

A quantitative study on reputational crises' impact on consumer based brand equity

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Abstract

A brand reputation is constantly in danger of being tarnished whether it is by their own inability to meet consumers’ standard when it comes to product quality, their disregard for ethical business, or being unlucky with the force of nature. But one crisis is seldom like another, and neither are their effects. This study utilizes dimensions of consumer based brand equity in order to explore how reputational crises stemming in a corporation’s own ability to produce quality goods and reputational crises stemming in corporate social irresponsibility affect those dimensions and to see, is there a difference?

The theory used based on Aaker, a marketing researcher who has come to be a prominent figure in terms of consumer based brand equity, Brown & Dacin who are largely to credit for making the discussion regarding different types of crises relevant, and authors who more often than not refer to the works of the previously mentioned prominent figures.

In order to find out if there is a difference in consumer reaction between corporate ability and CSR related crises a quantitative approach where means from a population, divided into two groups which received similar questionnaires with the same brand but the corporate ability or CSR crisis being the difference, were compared in order to find any potential differences between the groups.

The results from the survey were that corporate ability and CSR had a negative effect on purchase intention while there was no difference in the magnitude of the negative effect, likewise regarding product evaluation CSR and corporate ability had a negative effect while there was no difference in the magnitude of the effect, and for corporate evaluation CSR had a negative effect while corporate ability had no negative effect. To elaborate on this study, further research which includes variables such as brand loyalty while using other types of product categories is proposed.

Keywords: Consumer based brand equity, Corporate ability, CSR, reputational crisis, quantitative.
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1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a presentation of the issue by a string of separate fields of research which make up the combined area which is being treated in this thesis. Finally, the chapter is rounded off with the research question, its purpose, and its delimitations that all will be the foundation for the following chapters.

1.1 Stabbing the brand value

Brand equity, effects from marketing that are uniquely relatable to the brand, is one of the most important parts of a corporation’s total value (Veloutsou et al., 2013, p. 247). Naturally, caring for their brand equity should be a top priority for a corporation. But there are situations, due to circumstances, when that brand equity is challenged, in severe cases, it could be dubbed a crisis. The common ground is that when the situation is caused by an event regarding its own ability as a corporation to produce goods or services it is labelled a product harm crisis (Samaraweera et al. 2014, p. 2643), or in a more general sense, which includes more factors than the company’s own sphere of influence, it could be called a reputational crisis (Sohn & Lariscy, 2014, p. 24), an event which threatens the consumers’ perception or confidence in a corporation and its attributes. This is not a new phenomenon but has been around for ages, and will most likely stay around for ages. Early examples of reputational crises can be seen in the fall of the Medici Bank in the 15th century due to managerial failures combined with owners’ extravagant life styles to fuel the discontent among their customers and affiliates which lost huge sums of money and other banked goods (de Roover, 1947), or in contemporary case with Telia and their alleged bribery of government officials in connection with their telecom expansion in Transoxiana (SvD, 2015). Naturally, reputational crises would therefore reduce a brands brand equity (Sharp, 1995, p. 7). A reputational crisis as suggested by Sohn & Lariscy (2014, p. 24) should then be divided into two categories, proposed by Brown & Dacin (1997, p. 70), with one being Corporate ability, “the company’s expertise in producing and delivering products or services”, and the other being CSR, “the character of the company of the company, usually with regard to important societal issues”. Brown & Dacin (1997, p. 70) argued that at the time there was little to no distinction between the two in terms of marketing literature, but there should be as they believe consumers respond in different extents to events regarding CSR, such as failures in a philanthropic program, than to those which involve Corporate ability, such as a product breaking easily or being of inferior quality than what is promised or presumed. In their view, knowing the difference in consumer reaction between the two would have the managerial implication of enhanced mitigation ability in times of crises or which association, corporate ability or CSR, to emphasize in promotions (Brown & Dacin, p. 70). In later years, this distinction has grown yet more relevant as the growing CSR movement has since Brown and Dacin's article in 1997 become bigger than ever before (Mohiuddin, 2014) while social media has eased the spreading of bad word of mouth or information regarding incidents with faulty products or ethical scandals (Thomas et al. 2012, p. 88). As such, following the increased availability of information for the consumer regarding a corporation’s failures or incident, it has grown more relevant than before for managers who seek to understand their customers’ and consumers’ behaviour in times of a reputational crisis to make a distinction between the two. During latter years researching the two categories of reputational crises have gotten new wind in their sails and new angles are being surveyed.
1.2 Theoretical background

As described above, there are a bounty of sources for the problem, for example endorser transgressions where the cause of a reputational crisis lies with an affiliate to the particular corporation (Thomas & Fowler, 2016, p 377). The endorser transgression study mentioned brings up the, not so uncommon, scenario where a celebrity, whom is being endorsed by a brand, has been in an incident which tarnishes his or her reputation to a degree at which the endorses no longer wishes to be affiliated with the endorsee. Examples of situations of that art include the Tiger Woods adultery period, which saw his sponsors drop, or the accusations of Pewdiepie uploading a video that expressed his racist views, which prompted Disney to cancel their association. However, the study describes it as a two-way relationship where an endorsee could be prompted to drop his or her commitment to an endorser because of the endorsers transgressions, such as when Scarlet Johansson had to resign as an ambassador for SodaStream, an Israeli company that has been building production plants in the occupied West Bank (Thomas & Fowler, 2016, p. 377). As anticipated, the study would show that the negative attitude from the consumers following a transgression could be negated or mitigated by implementing management strategies such as mending the damage inflicted on the suffering part of the transgression, or cancelling the agreement all together (Thomas & Fowler, 2016, p. 387). It was suggested that the choice of strategy should be based on the endorsee's knowledge of the endorsers business, if consumer's deemed it plausible that the endorsee had any knowledge regarding the transgressions or quality of the product the reaction would be much more severe and a exist strategy was recommended, or how attributable the blame for the transgression is, in cases where plausible deniability was present and especially in CSR related cases it could be enough to issue an apology and initiate other philanthropic co-operations (Thomas & Fowler, 2016, p. 278). Another strategy suggested that could yield positive effects on brand equity in these situations is to initiate other philanthropic work or philanthropic projects. Liket & Maas (2015, p. 890, 891) describes strategic philanthropy as a mean for companies to fulfil their social responsibilities in the local communities where they operate, often while combining it with financial interests. Examples of financial interests promoted by philanthropic work are increased attractiveness in the eyes of investors (Liket & Maas, 2015, p. 891), increasing consumer trust, and raising profits from sales (Hastings, 2013, p. 281).

1.2.1 The spectrum of responsibilities to towards others

More direct causes of CSR type of reputational crises involve situations where brands by neglect or efforts to cut costs have been pushing means of production, sometimes by risking the welfare of their workers or the workers of their suppliers. This leads to a reputational crisis due to the altruistic values of the consumer, values which lay as a foundation for concerns for others causing bad will against those who act against those values (Straughan & Roberts, 1999, p. 561, 562). As such, altruism could be considered the other side of philanthropism, as altruism is concerned with the values which reside in each consumer, and therefore a consumer characteristic to be matched by corporate strategy, with mismatches causing discontent. In a practical example, H&M had an incident where one of its affiliated factories caught fire, resulting in 21 dead and more than 50 injured due to insufficient fire escapes or means to fight the fire, with consumer
discontent soon following (Hackman, 2010). This sort of incident has prompted researchers to survey consumer attitudes to corporations who have similar conditions in their production facilities, often mass produced goods, with Kang & Hustvedt (2014) being among those. In their research, they utilized three existing footwear brands in their study of consumer’s attitudes towards companies having production facilities in countries of the same region (Kang & Hustvedt, 2014, p. 258). Among their findings were that if a philanthropic aspect of the chain of production is disregarded for profit, such as safety or welfare of workers in less regulated regions as with the H&M case, it would cause a plenty of emotions within the consumer including, but not limited to, a loss of trust and a decrease in purchase intention that would last for quite some time to come (Kang & Hustvedt, 2014, p. 261, 262).

1.2.2 The spectrum of corporate's own ability

But there are plenty of reputational crises that do not involve philanthropic work or altruistic values, arguably most prominent of which are incidents with products not meeting consumer expectations, the corporate ability type of reputational crises. Following an incident with faulty products the response from consumers in general will result in a loss of market shares or sales while decreasing the trust of the brand (Souiden & Pons 2009, p. 107). To which extent the consumers respond to the incident depends on several factors including the company’s reputation, handling of the situation, and attention or coverage from third parties (Souiden & Pons 2009, p. 107). The difference from the study of Kang & Hustvedt (2014) and Thomas & Fowler (2016) is that in cases where the brand would take proactive action their consumers perception of the brand would at times in fact be higher than it previously was (Souiden & Pons, 2009, p. 110). This phenomenon is of course because of service recovery, the elementary response strategy taught in entry level business courses and utilized by corporations on a daily basis. A noteworthy difference is that in contrast to the effect of service recovery displayed in the study just mentioned, the studies done by Kang & Hustvedt (2014) and Thomas & Fowler (2016) indicates that the effect would be that trust is regain or purchase intention once again coming to previous levels because of proactive action. A possible conclusion would be that transgressions or incidents that affect the consumer personally are different from those that affect a third party.

1.2.3 Where the two are starting to become combined

The area of reputational crisis presented above is as shown most often treated as separate subjects, with researchers focusing on the effect on brand equity by either CSR related or corporate ability related issues' affecting consumer's attitudes, but there are only a few researchers that handle the combined field. One of the few is Kim (2014), who did a study upon what effect a CSR crisis had compared to a corporate ability crisis upon Chinese consumers’ evaluation of the company involved, with Company evaluation, Product evaluation, and Purchase intention being the independent variables (p. 161). The study was undertaken by utilizing fictional companies whom been put in a crisis, with one control group receiving prior information about the fictional company while the other group received none, (Kim, 2014, p. 161). Furthermore, the study surveyed if the same effect of the mentioned variables would be present if the crisis was due to the company's own mishandling or due to an outside factor, such as a third party tampering with their product (Kim, 2014, p. 161). Kim's own criticism against his work in part points out that the research was done using a fictional company but also that product-harm crises was
the focus and an approach with environmental or ethical considerations would most likely yield other results (2014, p. 169). While extensive, the consensus within the resulting discussion is that having positive prior CSR associations would have a mitigating effect in a product-harm crisis than positive prior corporate ability associations in certain cases, while having negative corporate ability associations prior to a product-harm crisis would yield a lesser decrease in its own dimensions than negative CSR corporate associations would yield in terms of its own dimension (Kim, 2014, p. 168).

1.2.4 Previous takes on explaining

It has been proposed that a possible reason for variance in consumer reaction is due to the cultural values of the consumer's nation. Pikturniene & Vasiliauskaite performed a simultaneous study on students in Lithuania and Sweden to measure their attitude towards CSR in general and towards companies in regards to ethical, legal, philanthropic, and economic issues (2012, p. 243). Their conclusion was that Swedish consumers, out of the four issues, react better if a brand primarily put their efforts into ethical issues, with philanthropic issues coming in at a close second (Pikturniene & Vasiliauskaite, 2012, p. 248). The authors would find that it differs when it comes to domestic consumers in Lithuania whom are more inclined to affiliate with brands that value the economic welfare of the company, their workers, and the workers of their suppliers, or staying within legal boundaries (Pikturniene & Vasiliauskaite, 2012, p. 248). The points raised by Pikturniene & Vasiliauskaite are in part based on the work of Hofstede and his cultural dimension index that is used to describe organisational culture in different nations and the difference between nations (2012, p. 239). Similarly, other researchers have been connecting their work in consumer behaviour to Hofstede to make their research more generalizable, such as McCrae & Costa (1994) in their mapping of consumer behaviour and attitude based upon the Big Five personalities, a dimension index that measures an individual based upon their degree of “Extraversion”, “Conscientiousness”, “Openness to experience”, “Agreeableness”, and “Neuroticism”. By connecting the work of McCrae & Costa, McCrae & Hofstede (2004) could use the cultural dimension of a nation, if the results of the behaviour research are tied to the Big Five personalities, to make general assumptions regarding the behaviour of the average consumer in a setting which has been previously researched in another nation. While the obvious critique of the method is that it gives a too generalized indication which hardly works in practice due to heterogeneous population, it holds the point that consumer behaviour is not only affected by the consumer’s intrinsic values and personality but also the nations or cultures values and general personality.

A more practical study was undertaken by Samaraweera et al. where Sri Lankan students and Chinese students undertook a simultaneous survey containing scenarios involving fictional companies in a product harm crisis and tested the respondents’ attitudes towards the companies in the different scenarios (2014, p. 2647). The results were that Sri Lankan students would strongly prefer a Super Effort strategy, in other words mending the damage done and offering excessive effort to satisfy the damaged part, while Chinese student saw such a strategy as overreacting and preferred voluntary recalls (Samaraweera et al. 2014, p. 2652). They argued that the difference between the populations’ results were due to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions with the Chinese result supposedly stemming from China’s low score in “Uncertainty Avoidance” while the reason behind the Sri Lankan results is more ambiguous in terms of cultural dimension ultimately attributed it to the Sri Lankan culture (Samaraweera et al. 2014, p. 2653).
1.3 Research question

Given the background of different approaches to explaining the effect of a reputational crisis upon consumer based brand equity, there is a gap in the existing research on which of the two types of reputational crisis affects consumer based brand equity the most. Hence, I propose a research question that incorporates consumers in a relatively underdeveloped area of combining two in their own right developed areas of research; consumer's reaction to CSR related reputational and corporate ability reputational crises, with the CSR angle being that of the by Kim (2014) proposed socio-ethical and environmental strands of CSR.

Does CSR transgression related reputational crises cause as much damage as Corporate Ability reputational crises in terms of consumer based brand equity?

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to survey the average consumer’s attitude towards the two kinds of reputational crises: CSR related and Corporate Ability related. Those attitudes will be determined by three commonly used dimensions of Brand equity: purchase intention, corporate evaluation, and product evaluation.

This study will provide a theoretical contribution to the issues of CSR related transgressions, Corporate Ability related transgressions, and a combination of the two as a comparison of the which is the 'lesser evil' when it comes to having a negative impact on CBBE, which will contribute to marketing research with an understanding of which values the consumers hold. The practical contribution lies within the comparison between the severities of the types of reputational crises and will help corporations in relevant businesses to draw conclusions about certain operative actions that could be classed as unwise from a CBBE perspective, and if undertaken a manager would be able to draw general conclusions about the severity of the CBBE damage. The final practical contribution would be to help understand which mitigation strategies would be appropriate for certain situations.

1.5 Delimitations

This study concerns the effect of a corporate ability and CSR related reputational crisis and therefore the phenomenon itself is the only one being studied. There are other factors which very well could weigh in as well, such as pre-existing philanthropic programs or other brand equity enhancing dimensions, or mitigation strategies to be implemented in a post-crisis environment. Those other factors are interesting in their own right and there exists a plethora of literature on the topics, some of which is being mentioned throughout this thesis, but I reiterate; the focus of this study is the crisis itself and therefore the pre- or post-crisis dimensions will not be included.

The ideal purpose of this study is to study the impact of corporate ability and CSR related upon CBBE among consumers and thus the ideal target population would then be every consumer possible. Unfeasible as that is due to identification issues, heterogeneity in such
a broad definition, geographical issues, and many others, delimitations had to be made, and as the author of this thesis is based in Umeå it becomes an initial geographical delimitation. The second delimitation becomes students, as they are easily identifiable and in combination with the geographical delimitation, the target population becomes students at Umeå University. The heterogeneity issue remains but it is not necessarily a bad thing as a corporation’s consumer base is seldom homogenous with differences in a wide variety of demographic or psychographic factors being present, and thus in a sense a heterogenous population is closer to reality than a homogenous one, albeit lacking the generalizability of the latter.

When carrying out this study the participants have to be faced with a situation or case to which their reactions are recorded. Given the target population it would have to be something a student can relate to and thus luxury products or services should be excluded as, with their limited economies, students are most likely not in a position to be luxury consumers. In order to have a situation with enough personal involvement the subject of the data collection will be a corporation producing affordable, characteristic, and non-polarising products, more on this in the practical method chapter.
2 Research Methodology

In this chapter, the philosophical standpoints will be discussed and how they are applicable to my own view. Moving on, the approach to research will be presented together with choices behind the design before finishing with a discussion on the literature search process. Throughout this chapter ‘the author’ is written as ‘I’ as it gives an improved readability.

2.1 Research philosophy

2.1.1 Preconceptions

The preconceptions I have regarding the field I am writing this thesis in is fairly limited. With professional knowledge being next to nil I have to rely on academic experiences. Part of that academic experience comes from, as mentioned, having studied courses in marketing while another part of that academic experience comes from previously writing a thesis on the subject of product-harm crises, to be more precise the Volkswagen emission scandal. Having that prior experience in writing a thesis with a similar topic could prove invaluable as it helps me grasping the subject in a more comfortable manner. Furthermore, a personal interest in reputational scandals, their causes and effects, has helped me grasping in grasping the necessity for studying the phenomenon.

2.1.2 The nature of social entities

Ontology is one of the oldest and most important parts of abstract philosophy, but in terms of research methodology ontology handles the question of social entities existence. To be more precise the context in which social entities exist, and is divided into the two main categories or ontological orientations, constructivism and objectivism (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20). By having a constructivist ontological orientation, the researcher considers the phenomenon surveyed as a spawn of institutions, culture, actions, and other social factors coexisting in a non-static context to form a unique social entity (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 21). The second approach, objectivism, is quite the opposite and considers the phenomenon to be independent of social actors and thus relationships between them can be proven (Bryman & Bell, p. 21).

Understanding the difference between the two and knowing which orientation to follow in the sequent parts of the process is important for any researcher as it is connected to the researcher’s preconceptions regarding the context and the world as a whole (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 110). Furthermore, as a student committing to marketing research, a part of the much broader field of social sciences, it would be appropriate to present the orientation that lies as a foundation for the research that is being carried out. Considering the targeted strands of brand equity that are purchase intention, corporate evaluation, and product evaluation, it would seem appropriate to consider the reality in an objectivism manner. This is in part due to the preconceptions which stem from the nature of the previous research regarding those strands as they have treated as dependant variables in a static sense to be quantified and separated from the context in order to measure cause and effects relationships for the purpose of conducting quantitative research. But it is also due
to the nature of a reputational crisis, a phenomenon which is believed, in line with the material presented in problem background, to affect the context of the consumer's sphere of decision making, indicating a cause and effect relationship where the measure of one phenomenon can be attributed to the introduction of another phenomenon. An argument could be made that by moulding the consumer's reaction in a manner where the reality is co-created, as the strands are affected and connected to the reputational crisis, a constructionist stand point is more valid. But in order to take a constructionist stand point one would have to consider any variables involved as inseparable from their context (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 21). In line with previous research my view is that while a reputational crisis' impact is affected by the subjective interpretations of the ones affected, it is still a separate event which affect a separate variable. When having an objectivist stand point one allows oneself to consider 'soft issues' such as subjective interpretations, biased by opinions and attitudes, into a static model with separated variables in order to test for significant relations (Saunders et al, 2016, p. 110), which is the goal of this thesis and ultimately, the views that I harbour are more in line with objectivism.

Displaying one’s values to increase transparency in the research is an important part of the methodological process, not only for transparency but as a help for the writer, according to Saunders et al. (2016, p. 128). But as my standpoint is in line with that of objectivism, the values I harbour should not affect the research, if the assumptions of objectivism hold true.

2.1.3 Handling knowledge

Epistemology handles the assumptions about knowledge, the foundation for deeming knowledge acceptable, valid or legitimate, and how said knowledge should be communicated (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 127). Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 15) describes the field in a similar manner while adding that one of the central issues in this context are the principles, procedures, and ethos of natural science. How complex the field may ever seem, it often boils down to using one out of five positions in order to explain one’s epistemological standpoint (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 136). In this thesis, I intend to utilize the existing theory regarding the main quantifiable attitudes that make up brand equity; purchase intention, corporate evaluation, and product evaluation, and test it with CSR and CA settings with certain expectations of the outcome. With this in mind, two of the approaches had to be discarded as interpretivism, which utilizes the participant's use of language, and postmodernism, which is mainly concerned with the social construct as founded in power relations, are not relevant because of their heavy constructivism focus (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 137). Out of the three remaining approaches, the most appealing and concurrent approach is that of positivism. Jake & Lewis (2003, p. 16) believes the following are the main points in positivism: the researcher is independent of the world and cannot affect it, facts and values are distinct and thus objective and value free inquiries are possible, observations are the final arbiter in theoretical disputes, and natural scientific methods such as hypothesis testing is possible. Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 15) expands upon this but the key point remains: knowledge is garnered by collecting data which may then form rules, these rules may then be tested by testing hypotheses which have been created through theory in a setting that is free from the values of the objective researcher. But there are other approaches that could be deemed valid, one such being realism. Similar in terms of their view that observable phenomenon are the ones that may provide credible data, or facts (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 138), and that the reality is external and to which the researchers direct their attention (Bryman & Bell, 2011, 17) realism does however split into
two types of realism, direct and critical (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 139). Out of the two, critical is the most prominent in social science (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 16) and opposes positivism by believing the above stated, the researcher his or her values in the research and the world exist in a social context, affected by culture, norms, and other forms of values (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 136, 139). In a similar fashion, pragmatism deals with practical knowledge and the context of those problems which may involve a myriad of influencing factors whom all have to be accounted for, but in its philosophy includes the need for participants to feel that what they are participating in 'feels real', ideally using real life settings to develop theories regarding problem solving and future practice (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 137; Servillo & Schreurs, 2013, p. 363). Naturally, as critical realism and pragmatism accounts for more influencing factors in its conclusions and has a more complex view upon results, the research would have to be more extensive than other approaches, which is the main reason for this thesis having its core epistemological approach being that of positivism since it's more time and cost effective.

2.2 Approaching research

With the view upon knowledge displayed, the next important step is to determine in what way theory and empirical research interact with each other in terms of research approach. The three main approaches are inductive, deductive, or abductive in their nature (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 145). For this research, the deductive approach was chosen. Deduction is a process through which propositions and hypotheses are generated through logically derived processes in order to use gathered evidence to support the conclusions made and is most often used in quantitative research (Jake & Lewis, 2003, p. 14, 23). When having a deductive approach, the researcher typically goes through the following six steps: Gathering theory, creating hypotheses, collecting data, revision of findings, confirming or rejecting created hypotheses, adding the findings to the existing theory (Bryman & Bell, 2009, p. 11). Those steps have been the groundwork for my thesis as I have read theories and research regarding consumer attitudes in times of reputational crises and measurable parts of brand equity in order to get an understanding of the theoretical area and to, through my problem background, formulate a research question and later on formulate hypotheses.

2.2.1 Research strategy

As mentioned before, the chosen ontological and epistemological standpoints of objectivism and positivism are working together with deduction for the sake of this thesis. When having those three together, the most appropriate strategy is based upon quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 26). Continuing the arguments made for deduction, the next step would be that of collecting data, in which the research design is relevant. According to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 45) there are five types of designs to be considered; experimental, cross-sectional (or social survey design), longitudinal, case study, or comparative design. Out of the five types, cross sectional is the chosen one. As Saunders et al. (2016, p. 200) puts it, a cross-sectional study is one which studies a particular phenomenon at a particular time and most often uses surveys as its method of data collection. This allows the usage of previously created constructs to be used, possibly in combination with others, for the purpose of collecting data from the target population to be used in hypothesis testing. The use of experimental design was considered, as it is another commonly used strategy in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 45),
but was ultimately scrapped as the non-complexity of survey based cross-sectional design is far more tempting in research context hampered by time and resource pressure.

### 2.2.2 Literature

The search for relevant literature has been a part of the process from the very start, with the initial search beginning with general information regarding crises and consumer reaction while gradually becoming more academic, culminating in the chosen research question. This coincides with what Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 92) argues, that the literature search's purpose is to identify the existing research in the field, related methodologies and research approaches, and find gaps in the field to formulate a research question.

When searching for literature the majority of the academic searches have been through the search engines provided by Umeå University's library. Prominent portals within that search engine includes Emerald insight, EBSCO, and Springer Journals. Where the search engine provided by Umeå University’s library would not suffice, Google Scholar would often prove useful as hits from searches would often redirect to the portals previously mentioned and access to those were granted by being logged in to the Umeå University's library website. In some cases, Google Scholar would not direct to one of those websites but instead to other sites containing peer-reviewed articles which, most of the time, were accessible through permissions granted by Umeå University. Common search terms were brand equity, consumer based brand equity, purchase intention, product evaluation, corporate evaluation, consumer attitudes, brand crisis, CSR brand crisis, corporate ability, corporate ability brand crisis, and corporate transgression. As some information is not readily available through academic or peer-reviews articles, some had to be taken from other sources. Most information of that kind was regarding real life events, such as the fire at the H&M factory, and using more established papers as a primary source of such information was a priority.

Being critical of the sources used is a vital part of any researchers process and is well summarized by Thurén (2003, p. 8) who argues that source criticism's purpose is to determine the truth of any poised argument regarding the reality. Saunders et al. (2016, p. 77) discusses four critiques to be present about the content being read; critique of rhetoric, tradition, authority, and objectivity. Rhetoric refers to evaluating the use of language, while it, according to Saunders et al. (2016, p. 77), mostly refers to the writers need to use language to effectively argue and make reasonable judgments in their writing it reasonable to assume it should apply when reading other’s work as well, to find any underlying or underrepresented reason for the piece being written. Saunders et al. (2016, p. 77) are quite straightforward in the explanation of the remaining three with critique of tradition referring to questioning conventional wisdom, critique of authority questioning the dogma laid down as a truth by the dominants in the field, and critique of objectivity referring to the recognition that yours and others discussions hardly are completely free of personal values. In an attempt to accommodate for these approaches to criticism when searching for and citing authors contrasting views are seen as a mean to question the dominant dogmas or conventional wisdoms, while coherent views among authors could be seen as a way of tackling the underlaying personal values which plagues the individual discussions. In regards to the first matters of dogmas and conventional wisdoms, the number of researchers being cited for the methodology and practical methodology chapter are
an exception to this as the ones used are quite dominant in the field and often comple-
ments what the other lacks and having little criticism being pointed to that fact, making it
out to be what Saunders et al. (2016, p. 77) invites to question.

But more steps have been taken in the name of source criticism. As mentioned earlier,
peer-reviewed articles have been the primary source to increase the credibility of said
sources, with the only exception being established newspapers or websites when gather-
ing information about past events. When handling which of the peer-reviewed sources to
be used, there has been considerations of date of publishing and number of citations, but
neither has been a definite criterion for inclusion. For instance, a field that have since long
been established and works by authors who repeatedly have been cited and released works
upon non-contemporary subjects are treated with less scrutiny than those of the opposite,
lesser known authors working on contemporary topics. This comes from the consideration
that, while considering the critique of authority, some theories resistant to time and have
been established as the dogma on which newer theory is built upon, such as core theories
regarding brand equity’s value to a company. But with newer or less developed areas a
lot of emphasis has been put on the time of publication as contemporary topics are more
prone to be outdated. Therefore, recently published work has been a priority with aca-
demic material published nearly a decade ago has been mostly avoided. As a final note
on source criticism, referring to or using the original source of a quote has been attempted
as much as possible, as some of the meaning of the original statement might be lost over
a large span of citations. But, at some point a few of the sources were unobtainable and
thus a second-hand source was used.
3 Theoretical Framework

This chapter is dedicated to reviewing the existing literature on reputational crises, CSR-related brand crises, corporate ability brand crises, brand equity, purchase intention, corporate evaluation, and product evaluation. The chapter begins with a general view upon the types of crises and then moves on to explain the parts of brand equity that are being researched. The chapter ends with the resulting conceptual model.

3.1 Reputational crises

When highly-negative events happen, and they are publicized with stakeholders re-evaluating their position and attitudes regarding the company's activities and the company itself, it is normally called a reputational crisis (Zyglidopoulos & Phillips, 1999, p. 344), discerning itself from a 'reputational problem' by its magnitude and scope (Lee, 2005, p. 277). Zyglidopoulos & Philips (1999, p. 336) take a rather linear approach to describing the process of a crisis: there is a triggering event (the highly-negative one) which the stakeholders become aware off and interoperates, the stakeholders then form opinions and attitudes which are influenced by previous experiences and later react upon those, it is then managers' turn to interoperate and react with the impact of their reaction depending upon their responsiveness, power, and legitimacy. The description by Zyglidopoulos & Philips is insufficient though as it merely describes a highly-negative event as the source of a reputation crisis, but as Quarantelli (1988, p. 373) points out, a highly-negative event may also involve natural disasters which are normally seen as unavoidable, mostly unpredictable, and primarily supposed to be handled by the community. Booth (2000, p. 197) elaborated upon this, arguing that a reputational crisis is actually caused by the aftermath of another crisis where the affecting part has not reacted in a manner which is satisfying for the stakeholder. To delve into reputational crises and formulate hypotheses, the distinction of corporate ability- and CSR-related crises has to be made.

Corporate ability in itself is a fairly comprehensible subject. Brown & Dacin (1997, p. 70) described it as a corporation's expertise in producing and delivering its products or service offerings to the consumer, judging by innovativeness and reliability among other factors. The corporate ability is argued to be the result of a process in which the internal structure and efficiency of the company becomes a priority and responsibility of the production management, with their efforts resulting in the foundation for the marketing management function to fulfill their responsibility in satisfying the appropriate consumers while maximizing profit (Rust et al., 2002, p. 7-9). Thus, faults in the management function will be evident when it reaches the consumer, if not caught on beforehand, while faults in the marketing function does not have the luxury of another step of the process before it reaches the consumer, exposing it even more for the risk of causing an ability related reputational crisis. According to Klein & Dawar (2004, p. 205) these types of crises have become more common due to the increasing demands from consumers which causes an increase in the complexity of the products and their production processes, which adds to the already inherent complexity. For the purpose of this study a corporate ability reputational crisis will be defined in line with Jeon & Baeck’s (2016, p. 551) reasoning where a crisis which tarnishes the corporate’s image of quality or ability to produce goods to the expected standard is classified as a corporate ability crisis.
When describing CSR, the triple-bottom-line of ethical, environmental, and social contexts are the often used as it gives a general yet comprehensible description of CSR, and it is commonly defined as efforts to promote human rights or secure feasible labour conditions, efforts to protect the environment and reduce the ecological footprint, and efforts to support local communities or promote solving diversity issues (Romani et al., 2012, p. 194). It has grown to be excepted by consumers that corporations should accommodate these issues into their operations, prompting non-efforts to be met with scepticism, and transgressions to be met with contempt (Herzig & Moon, 2013, p. 1870). What exactly constitutes a perceived transgression or severity of a transgression has been attributed to a variety of factors, most famously by Coombs (2007) whom identified the company's perceived control, it's responsibility in the crisis, severity of the crisis, the organisational reputation prior to the incident and if there has been any history of transgressions as factors which all affected the stakeholders’ attribution of blame to the corporation.

An early attempt to explain the connection between the attitudes of consumers and the CSR-related actions or programs undertaken by companies was done by Straughan & Roberts (1999). They argue that by catering to the altruistic values of the consumers with corporate philanthropism through pro-environmental actions, a strengthening of positive attitudes would become evident, but only as long as those pro-environmental actions and their benefits for the consumer was advocated clearly (Straughan & Roberts, 1999, p. 568). Conversely, acting against the altruistic values of the consumer or being in a situation where those values are being trampled upon will risk alienating whole segments (Straughan & Roberts, 1999, p. 567). In a similar manner, Romani et al. (2012, p. 196) argued that the altruistic values which consumers hold are underlying factors that affect their attitudes or opinions regarding companies, and in cases where CSR-efforts would correspond with the consumers' altruistic values emotions such as gratitude would surface as a result of the benevolent corporate actions, resulting in positive word of mouth. But just as gratitude was shown in positive CSR-situations, negative effects have also been seen as Sohn & Lariscy (2014, p. 36) found CSR-related variables to be recovering in a much slower pace than those related to corporate ability, in their argumentation due to attitudes regarding the brand itself dropping rather than attitudes regarding their ability to produce good quality products. For the purpose of this study the reasoning of Jeon & Baeck (2016, p. 551) is once more utilized where a CSR-related crisis is defined as a reputational crisis where a CSR-related transgression has taken place without the corporation’s product quality or production ability being affected.

### 3.2 Brand equity

As mentioned in the introduction, brand equity is the result of unique marketing activities which are related to the brand (Veloutsou et al., 2013, p. 247). What exactly constitutes brand equity has traditionally been hard to define though, due to its complex and intangible nature (Chatzipanagiotou, 2016, p. 5479). But ever since the early nineties and late eighties, brand equity has been dichotomized into firm-based brand equity (FBBE) and consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) (Aaker, 1991, p. 299). While the FBBE is mostly for those interested in using it for accounting purposes, looking to acquire or merge a brand, or even divest in a brand, the CBBE is concerned with the perception of the brand among consumers and their reaction to the corporates marketing mix (Keller, 1993, p. 1.2). Originally, Aaker (1991, p. 299) argued that CBBE is constituted of brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and other proprietary
brand assets but later expanded upon his original argumentation and together with Joachimstahler (2000, p. 352) shortened his original five components down to four, removing other proprietary brand assets out of the equation as it was too ambiguous for a model describing CBBE. According to Broyles et al (2010, p. 160), CBBE reflects the consumers’ beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes towards a product which is marketed by a brand as opposed to a non-brand product, resulting in the consumer perceiving the brand as having a certain value itself. The basis of Broyles et al. research was that brand equity could be roughly measured by (re)purchase intention, a measurement that was the result of a combination of experiential aspects, brand resonance and imagery, and practical aspects, perceived quality and performance (2010, p. 160, 161). One of their conclusions were that using only two cultures, American and Chinese, was a limitation that most likely caused the difference in importance of experiential aspects, while the importance of the practical aspects for (re)purchase intention were similar across the samples and thus a reliable measurement of CBBE (Broyles et al. 2010, p. 165, 166). In a similar sense, Kim (2014) utilized the practical aspects of product evaluation, brand evaluation, and purchase intention to measure CBBE. Buil et al. (2013) used existing companies to measure the effect upon brand equity from perceived quality stemming from physical characteristics, brand awareness based upon recognition, brand associations based on trust and affection, and brand loyalty. They concluded that perceived quality and brand associations would not only have a direct effect upon brand equity, but also have a direct effect upon brand loyalty which in turn had a direct effect upon brand equity, creating an echoing positive effect whereas brand awareness would not have a significant effect upon brand equity, a finding in line with previous research on the connection between brand equity and brand awareness (Buil et al. 2013, p. 68). Khudri & Farjana (2017, p. 14) are another pair of researchers whom used these aspects in a tweaked conceptual model to test their hypotheses in an exploratory study. As they argue, the dimensions suggested by Aaker in 1991 and revisited by Aaker & Joachimstahler in 2000 are what modern research of CBBAE builds upon (Khudri & Farjana, 2017, p. 14), even if it strays from time to time by excluding one or two of the dimensions in favour of their own suggested dimensions. It is from the following discussion the use of product evaluation and corporate evaluation in this thesis comes, the brand awareness aspect is not included as the reputational crisis itself is very unlikely to affect the consumer’s existing degree of awareness while brand loyalty has been the target of many of the studies previously mentioned.

3.3 Effects on brand equity during reputational crisis

3.3.1 Product evaluation

Product evaluation is the result of the consumer subjectively assessing products based on the products' tangible characteristics (Khudri & Farjana, 2017, p. 15), characteristics which often gravitates around the core functions of the product, which in the case of edible products usually involve taste, smell, and texture (Fornerio & d'Hautehille, 2010, p. 35).

In its nature, product evaluation is what constitutes a large part of brand equity in non-service industries, often constituting the basis for setting the prices in a premium category (Netemeyer et al., 2004). When researching the impact upon CBBAE by the different dimensions of Aaker with the Chinese sportswear market being the setting, Tong & Hawley (2009) set out with the hypothesis that product evaluation would have a significant impact upon CBBAE but had to reject their hypothesis as there was no such relationship to be
found. Seeking to delve deeper into this relationship and possibly explain why an otherwise established dimension of CBBE was not significantly impacting the same, Su (2016) undertook a similar approach using clothing in a non-premium category (fast fashion), coming to the conclusion that while product evaluation is better used as a mediating factor that enhances brand loyalty, it is indeed significant on its own as well.

However, while the effect of a crisis on product evaluation naturally is negative (Park & Lee, 2013, p. 224), its severity between categories is not as clear. When the reason for a reputational crisis stems from the corporation's own ability, it would seem to affect the consumer's product evaluation severely, especially if the company in question previously had a record of not being involved in any product recall scandals or alike (Kim, 2014, p. 160). The same was not believed to be the case when the crisis instead stemmed from the corporation's work with CSR-related issues, as Kim argue that consumers will feel more offended if they expected the company to deliver products without fault but failed to do those than if the products held an acceptable level of evaluated quality but ethical, social, or environmental issues were not considered in an appropriate manner (Kim, 2014, p. 160). Brown & Dacin (1997, p. 71) would argue in similar ways, albeit in a time where CSR was less relevant than today, stating that the question whether the product was ethical or not was not central to the consumer when evaluating the qualities of the product, at least not on par with the importance of the corporation's ability to produce. However, through their three parallel studies they concluded that CSR did indeed have an effect, possibly from overall evaluations of the company having a spill-over effect, causing some of it to influence the consumer's evaluation of the product, although not to the same extent as corporate ability would (Brown & Dacin, 1997, p. 80). Sohn & Lariscy (2014, p. 37) would come to resonate the findings of Brown & Dacin, stating that while CSR would come to have a significant impact upon brand equity, the product evaluation would face lesser damage as the transgressions of social norms or ethical rules did not affect the consumers personally.

With the earlier work presented I hypothesise the following:

H (1): Corporate ability related reputational crises have a negative effect on Product Evaluation.

H (2): CSR related reputational crises have a negative effect on product evaluation.

H (3): A corporate ability related reputational crisis has a larger negative impact upon Product Evaluation than a CSR related reputational crisis.

3.3.2 Corporate Evaluation

Corporate Evaluation, often interchangeable with brand association, incorporates the consumers’ associations regarding the brand or corporation, whether it be from memory or how the consumer interprets news regarding the corporation or corporate actions (Khudri & Farjana, 2017, p. 14). Much like product evaluation, corporate evaluation dictates the consumer’s immediate attitudes through subjective assessment but unlike product evaluation mainly through intangible characteristics (Aaker, 1996, p. 111).

In the research mentioned earlier by Tong & Hawley (2009), much like the connection between product evaluation and CBBE the connection between corporate evaluation and CBBE was believed to be significant. Corporate evaluation contains the meaning of the brand for consumers with the affiliated associations being a communicator of all the features and aspects which are independent of the products themselves (Chen, 2001, p.
441). The previous sentence begins the Tong & Hawley's argumentation, in their view CBBE is partly constituted by corporate evaluation through a value creation process which includes retrieval of information, the generation of strong and favourable feelings towards the brand, and unique cues which make the brand stick out (Tong & Howley, 2009, p. 264). Similar to the case with product evaluation, Su (2016, p. 475) found corporate evaluation to be a significant predictor of CBBE while also influencing brand loyalty and enhancing product evaluation.

As corporate evaluation builds upon feelings and perceptions towards a brand, it comes as no surprise that the overall assessment of a corporation decreases during a reputational scandal, argued by some to stem from a breaching of the trust, or lack of distrust, held towards the brand in question (Lin et al., 2011, Kang & Hustvedt, 2014, Romani et al., 2008). As mentioned in the product evaluation text, a reputational crisis stemming from the corporation's own ability would hurt product evaluation harder than a CSR related crisis (Kim, 2014, p. 160). Conversely, Kim argues that when evaluating the effect of a crisis on corporate evaluation the result becomes quite different as consumers tend to be more forgiving towards a corporation that has been in a CA related crisis when it comes to corporate evaluation, arguing that the company have been unlucky or mistakes have been made, but with CSR related issues it is seen more as a deliberate act and consumers become less trusting as to not be deceived (Kim, 2014, p. 159, 160). This notion also lies with Lin et al. (2011, p. 458) who argue that those who identify with a brand, or at least does not harbour any ill will towards a brand, will not be budged in their evaluation over issues in the corporation's production. However, if the corporation is involved in unethical or socially unjustifiable operations the consumer's evaluation of the corporation will be lowered because the lowered trust and inability to identify with unethical or socially unjustifiable behaviour, and supposedly for a longer duration of time than an equally severe reputational crisis involving corporate ability (Lin et al., 2011, p. 458, 459, 464). There seem to be a consensus within the literature that when it comes to evaluating the corporation and its reputation per se, the most discussed factor is work with CSR (Romani et al, 2013; Hastings 2016; Kang & Hustvedt, 2014; Lii & Lee, 2011) while less attention is directed at corporate ability (Lin et al., 2011).

With that background presented I hypothesise the following:

- H (4): Corporate ability related reputational crises have no negative effect on corporate evaluation.
- H (5): CSR related reputational crises have a negative effect on corporate evaluation.
- H (6): CSR related reputational crises have a larger negative effect on corporate evaluation than Corporate ability related reputational crisis.

While it could be viewed as self-explanatory that a negative impact (H5) would be a larger negative impact than one which is not negative (H4), the aim of this research is to survey the difference in reputational crises magnitudes and thus the inclusion of H6 is deemed useful for the research purpose.

### 3.3.3 Purchase intention

The use of Purchase intention as a measurement of consumer's willingness to buy has been around for more than half a century, with early authors such as Jean Namias (1959) early on attempting to conceptualize the connection between attitude (purchase intention) and behaviour. Jean Namias' work would later be an influence for Armstrong & Overton (1971) who attempted to expand the use of purchase intentions, or intent to purchase as it
was still called, by examining the effect of brief or extensive texts with information upon purchase intention. In modern business research, purchase intention is widely used as a predictor of subsequent behaviour (Grewal, 1998, p. 338), the best predictor of actual behaviour according to some (Peter & Olson, 2010, p. 145). While Purchase intention is not included by Aaker in his dimensions of CBBE, purchase intention is often used in connection to measuring CBBE, and according to some purchase intention is the result of having good CBBE (Bian & Liu, 2011, p. 21; Moreira et al., 2017, p. 74) while others argue that purchase intention enhance CBBE (Kim, 2014, p. 161) or helps to measure CBBE (Choi & Chung, 2013, p. 14). As seen in the previous sentence, purchase intention is connected in various ways to CBBE and since purchase intention is, according to Grewal et al. (1998, p. 338), a widely-used predictor of behaviour, it is included in this research despite not being a part of Aaker’s dimensions.

However, as purchase intention is widely used there naturally exist a plethora of ways to explain the attitude. Kang & Hustvedt (2014, p. 256) explains purchase intention as a result of corporate actions which evoke sensations of trust and 'general attitudes' towards the corporation, with trust stemming from ethical or socially justifiable actions and transparency in the corporation's organisation. In their conclusion, the finding that purchase intention was affected more by trust than by general attitudes was lifted, possibly because of the nature of the research which was based on CSR related activities within mass-producing companies with a worldwide consumer basis (Kang & Hustvedt, 2014, p. 262, 263). Similarly, Singh et al. (2010, p. 544) argued that corporate misconduct would incur negative consequences mainly in the form of lessened trust and in extension purchase intention, which would in their view hold especially true in cases with CSR related misconduct as it was deemed more 'villainous' than corner-cutting or mistakes happening in the production. But as pointed out by Castalado et al. (2010, p. 660), trust is not only constituted by CSR related activities and issues, one of its core materials is competence or rather the ability to deliver on what has been promised or expected of the corporation. By extension, a breach of that trust though broken promises or expectations leads to lowered purchase intention. This has been tested and its relationship proven as while a decent assessment of corporate ability makes the consumer less inclined to negative attitudes and reduced involvement, negative attitudes regarding the corporations’ ability has the opposite effect, instead reducing purchase intention and faith in the corporates ability (Lin et al., 2011, p. 460). Park & Lee (2013, p. 219) concur with this, stating that a reputational crisis in which the corporation could be held accountable or where the cause stems from the production, will lower purchase intention. Their result does however only account for who is responsible, not for what type of predicament the corporation has gotten itself into. From the presented theory, no clear consensus may be derived, as authors argue for both corporate ability and CSR being the one type to be more influential than the other when it comes to purchase intention. The one thing to be derived from the literature therefore is that both corporate ability and CSR related reputational crises will reduce the consumer's purchase intention. Therefore:

H (7): Corporate ability related reputational crises have a negative effect on purchase intention.
H (8): CSR related reputational crises have a negative effect on purchase intention.
H (9): Corporate ability and CSR related reputational crises have an equal negative impact on purchase intention.
3.4 Conceptual Model

The conceptual model visualises the effect of CSR related reputational crises on product evaluation (H2), Corporate evaluation (H5), and Purchase intention (H8), while also visualising the effect of Corporate Ability on product evaluation (H1), Corporate evaluation (H4), and Purchase intention (H7). The arrows signal a significantly larger negative impact for a type of reputational crisis where H3 is Corporate Ability’s larger impact than CSR’s on product evaluation, H6 being CSR’s larger impact than Corporate Ability’s on Corporate evaluation, and finally H9 visualising the equally negative impact of the two types of reputational crisis.
4 Practical Methodology

In this chapter I explain the choices regarding target population, its sampling, and sampling technique, then moving on to explain the method used to collect data. The middle part of this chapter is dedicated to the work around the constructing the data collection tool, followed by a discussion regarding the ethical considerations in the data gathering.

4.1 Type of data to be used

When it comes to collection of data, one of the prime resources in any research, the choice falls on either utilizing primary data collected by oneself, or secondary data which others have collected beforehand (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 313). As Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 312-320) continues, using secondary data have several advantages; it is cost and time effective to use data that has already been gathered and operationalized, many data bases consist of data collected by professional agencies whom almost certainly do a better job in said collection than a business student, and it allows for longitudinal studies and cross-cultural analysis (not necessarily for the chosen type of convenience sample, because of the discussed problems regarding generalization). But just as there are advantages there are disadvantages; the researcher may not be familiar with the secondary data and may thus misinterpret it, the secondary data may be overly complex for easy use, and the data may be lacking in quality or number of variables needed for the specific research questions to be answered (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 320-322). With the importance of data as a resource, careful considerations have to been taken as to not gain incomplete or inaccurate data, and after considering both types of data the choice has come to be primary data. This is due to the uniqueness of the posed research question where only two of the normally used four dimensions of CBBE are included together with purchase intention, a variable seldom used parallel with the aforementioned dimensions, this uniqueness calls for new generation of data.

4.2 Sampling

As mentioned earlier, the art of this study is that of quantitative. The primary goal of a quantitative study is to collect data and quantify it to enable the drawing of conclusions and derive those to the target population (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 162-163). However, surveying the whole population is both expensive and unnecessary if a representative sample could be created via sampling, a sample which reproduces the population in a smaller and more easily handled size (Neuman, 2011, p. 240). According to De Vaus (2002, p. 70), the first two steps in the process of sampling is to first clearly define a target population, with the subsequent step being establishing a sampling frame which emphasizes feasibility and relevancy in an easily identifiable target population, and the other step being creating an actual sample. When creating said actual sample, one may choose from two types of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 275). The first type, according to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 176, 179-181), refers to the process of sampling when every unit within the population has an equal and known chance of being selected with sampling techniques including simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, and multi-stage cluster sampling. One
of the main advantages of using a probability sample is its high degree of generalizability, as the whole population is being used as a sample (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 185). That does however, naturally, require the whole population to be available to contact for surveying, something non-probability sampling does not require which is one of the reasons why non-probability sampling is often preferred in business or marketing studies (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 295). In non-probability sampling, there are four main techniques; Quota, Purposive, Volunteer, and Haphazard, with all four having one or more underlying associated technique unique to the main technique (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 298). Out of the four, a haphazard convenience sampling technique was used, a technique where the researcher often asks passers-by to answer an interview or questionnaire or where a group from the population are asked to participate, because of its suitability with low costs and ease of access to the sample (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 190) which is desirable when time is of the essence in the data gathering process. The main drawback of the technique is that the generalizability is very low, next to none, which makes a study utilizing a convenience sample lacking in credibility, while also risking being influenced by the researchers’ personal bias when choosing respondents (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 298, 304). The sample consisted of students studying a course at USBE at time which was suitable for data gathering, with a desired size being above 60 in order to have at least 30 participants answering each type of questionnaire in order to be able to conduct statistical analysis.

4.3 Data gathering

4.3.1 Collection

Questionnaires, according to Saunders et al., 2016, p. 439, is one of the most widely used method for collecting data as it an efficient way of collecting responses from a larger number of respondents at one or more occasions to be used in quantitative analysis. Furthermore, questionnaires may come in two main forms; self-administered questionnaires which can be delivered to the respondent via internet or postal services or in person, or the interviewer-completed type of questionnaire which can be recorded in person or via a telephone or other suitable communication device (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 440). The advantages with self-administered questionnaires, ultimately the chosen type of questionnaire, are that it is more time and cost efficient, the researcher has very little to none influence over the answers, the respondent does not necessarily feel any pressure from the researcher and thus potentially more comfortable, and if structured correctly there is no confusion regarding the order of answering any questions (Bryman & Bell, p. 232, 233). Conversely, the disadvantages include questions not being of interest for the respondent which may face ‘bad’ or dishonest answers, there is no possibility to collect further data from the same respondent once the questionnaire has been finished and returned, there is no guarantee that the respondent is actually a part of the target population, every question in the questionnaire may not be completed which causes missing or faulty data, and there is no possibility for the respondent to have questions clarified if there is uncertainty regarding any of them (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p 233, 234). The last disadvantage may however be mitigated if not helped by being present in the room in which the survey is taking place.

Administrating the survey to the chosen convenience sample took place in a classroom setting with numbered questionnaires being delivered personally. In order to find a suitable classroom with enough students a lecturer whom I previously had as a lecturer in a
course was contacted and asked for permission to prolong the lecture's coffee break by five minutes in order for the students to participate in the study. The students were assigned to the CSR or Corporate ability group depending on which questionnaire they received with odd numbers receiving the corporate ability version and even numbers the CSR. Using this classroom setting had the obvious drawback of participants being in an environment where they are under a time stress, with the looming promise of a break as soon as they finish the questionnaire, which may have caused rushed answered while there could be a reluctance to speak out to ask the researcher to clarify a question due to wishing not to look 'foolish' or alike.

4.4 Questionnaire design

4.4.1 Ethical considerations

When conducting research there are always times when actions have to be influenced by considering the ethical aspect. Saunders et al. (2016, p. 244) lists principles to be used out of which the ones most important for this study are:

- Participants' privacy
- Voluntary participation
- Informing regarding the purpose
- Ethicality in the handling of data

In quantitative research, besides respecting the participants, there is no real need for the participant's identification to be known, other than that they are a part of the target population, prompting the researcher to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. This was ensured by not asking for names or alike in the questionnaire and not displaying the course in which the participants were enrolled. Beyond that, the participants participate freely and may under no circumstance be harassed or forced to participate even if the participant at first was willing before wanting to exist before finishing the participation, for which there are actions such as considering the entry only partly useable or simply discarding the entry. This was made clear to the participants by a part of the questionnaire stating that their participation and completion of the questionnaire is entirely voluntary. The participants are entitled to knowing the purpose of the research and their role in it, which is displayed in the introduction text. Not least of the four brought up is the handling of data where the researcher, out of respect for the participants and the research itself, should not alter any data, neither primary nor secondary data, and report the included data accurately and in context without skewing the results in the researcher’s inexcusable favour.

4.4.2 General considerations

When used as a tool for collecting data, the design of the questionnaire is of the outmost importance if the data collected is going to hold any form of validity or be of use to the researcher, putting a lot of emphasis on properly constructing the questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 449).

First consideration was which questions, or constructs, to include. According to Saunders et al. (2016, p. 452) you as a researcher may choose to write the questions and constructs yourself, you may adapt from other researcher to make their constructs or questions better fit your own research, or you may adopt their constructs right as they are. One of the
obvious advantages with adopting, and to an extent adapting, is that it does open up possibilities to compare your research to what others have done before while having effectively done a pilot study of your adopted constructs through the source research, thereby increasing the validity and reliability if such tests of which have been included in the source material (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 263). More on the source and structure of the constructs in its own respective section.

The second consideration was the length of the questionnaire. While the presumption exist that a questionnaire may not be too long or the respondent will lose interest and induce a reluctance to answering honestly or at all, this is nothing but a presumption lacking any evidence of the fact (De Vaus, 2002, p. 112). Instead, as Fowler (2009, p. 104) points out, the sample and setting in which makes up the data collection situation should determine how to best design the collection tool. As the setting was in a classroom during a coffee break with respondents probably aching to go, a short questionnaire was deemed suitable in order for the respondents to not lose interest.

The third consideration was the language, as questions were translated from their original English into Swedish in order to accommodate for different levels of fluency in English among the respondents, there was a risk of meaning being lost in the translation while a reluctance to not use 'simplified' language could cause confusion among respondents whom are not familiar with the used terms or abbreviations. This was mainly handled during pilot testing and consulting with fellow students to ensure comprehension among the respondents.

The fourth consideration was regarding the corporate ability and CSR manipulation. To be as comparable as possible it was necessary form them to feel equally real and be of the same severity to the respondent as to compare their impact. More on this process in the following sections.

The fifth consideration was if I as the researcher should be present or not during the data gathering. The choice fell on being present in order to see if there were any abnormalities, questions, or other things worthy of notice. While being in the classroom, there were no questions from the participants to me, there were however some chatter among them, and from what I could hear it was mostly regarding what the question was about. There were some flipping back and forth through the questionnaires, unfortunately likely to see what the participant answered previously in order to have different answers for the next set of questions.

4.4.3 Constructs

The questionnaire consists of five different constructs with one for demographic data, one for describing the reputational crisis, and one each for product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention which were repeated after introducing the respondent to the corporate ability or CSR related scenario. Finding and deciding upon items for the constructs was done by screening studies done with product evaluation, corporate evaluation, or purchase intention and those who had done studies with acceptable Cronbach’s alpha or comparable measurement were considered for the final construct patchwork. The demographic construct contained three very basic questions as demographic variables were not included in the purpose of this research. Therefore, the respondents are only asked to state their gender, age, and if they are enrolled in a program or course with the
USBE to not include anyone not belonging to the target population in the sample. The construct for product evaluation consists of four items, two of which were adapted from Yoo et al. (2000, p. 203) and one from Yoo & Donthu (2001, p. 14) who both credit the source of the fourth item, the study done by Aaker in 1996 (p. 118). The construct for corporate evaluation contains four items as well, three of which comes from Berens et al. (2005, p. 46) and one from Lin et al. (2011, p. 467). The purchase intention construct was made from four items as well, with three of them coming from Lin et al. (2011, p. 467) and the last one from Kang & Hustvedt (2014, p. 258). The construct depicting the reputational scandal was created by drawing inspiration from Samaraweera et al. (2014, p. 2648) who used crafted scenarios to test the impact of those scenarios upon respondents in different countries and monitor the different reactions to those scenarios. A table for the sources and their respective constructs could be found in Appendix 5. All of the mentioned sources for the used constructs used a five-point Likert scale, naturally the same was used in this questionnaire. The scenarios for this questionnaire, one with corporate ability focus and one with CSR focus, where based upon different real-life events which have been used in other research while following the definitions in the theory chapter for said types of crisis. The scenario with corporate ability focus is a summarization of the melamine contamination scandal in China which was unveiled in 2008 and used in Custance et al.’s (2012) research on crisis management. The scenario with CSR focus was based upon the Coca Cola disaster in which drinking water and agricultural fields were poisoned by contamination of a pond in the vicinity of the nearby production plant (Singh, 2015). In order to measure before and after, was deemed necessary to use and through discussion with peers the demands of well-known, likeable, and not inclined to polarization of respondents (such as Apple vs Samsung or Mac vs PC) were set. The choice then became Ben & Jerry's, one of the most prominent ice cream brands with a presence in nearly every grocery store in Sweden. The scenarios may be found in Appendix 1 & 2.

4.4.4 Pilot study

In order to test the constructs with their language, comprehensibility, and general design a pilot study was carried out. According to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 263) the participants in the pilot study should not be a part of the target population, partly to prevent any possible damage to the representability of the subsequent sample. Instead, the participants should be from a population comparable to the one which the sample will be taken from (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 263). The chosen participants were therefore made up of students at other universities, with a few non-students in order to make sure there were no incomprehensible phrases due to complicated academic language or any of that sort. The scenarios for the corporate ability and CSR related reputational crisis were accompanied with questions regarding the pilot study's respondents' view of realism and severity in an attempt to make the both of them equally severe and 'real'.

Out of the ten participants taking part in the pilot study, seven had no questions or suggestions regarding the questionnaire itself, with a couple of those seven asking the introduction text to be clearer regarding the purpose of the study which was then promptly clarified. The other three had suggestions regarding the scenarios and how to improve those. The general opinion amongst them was that the content itself was suitable but some of the wording should be changed to partly suggest it was of matching scale, or in other words comparable amounts of people or production plants involved, and to make it even more clear that the subsequent questions were to be answered regardless of answers given
before reading the scenario. Additionally, the corporate ability related scenario was modified to include a phrase explaining that the incident was noted and not accepted by the corporation in order to make it seem more real and ‘less evil’. Both changes were made and the respondents consulted with to see if the changes were satisfactory, which they were. The result of the severity and realism check was that both scenarios were deemed plausible and of equal severity. One of my peers noted that when it was time to answer the questions regarding product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention again the peer tried to remember what the peer answered the last time and partly based the answers in the post-scenario constructs on the answers given in the pre-scenario constructs. As the study’s intention is to survey how the crisis impacts consumer based brand equity, a phrase asking the participant to not mind the answers given in the first part was added, which was considered ample for the purpose by the researcher and the peer. Apart from the criticism regarding the scenarios, the three participants had no criticism regarding the constructs for product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention and thus they were left without moderation.
5 Presentation and analysis of data

This chapter is laid out like the questionnaire. Beginning with a presentation of the analysis software and the demographic data, the chapter moves on to explaining the reliability of the items in the constructs before presenting the first method of analysing the data before moving on to presenting the second method. The chapter finishes with the revised conceptual model. In the tables, Corporate ability has been shortened to CA in order to save space. A threshold of \( p = 0.05 \) or a \( t \)-value of 3.14, being commonly used threshold values in business research, where utilized for approving or disproving a result.

One of the most widely used, and possibly most popular, software for analysing quantitative data is IBM’s SPSS statistics (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 360). This was chosen above other contenders, such as Minitab or SAS, as SPSS is more familiar to me and thus eased the analysis process.

100 questionnaires were brought to the event classroom where the collection took place of which a total of 71 respondents, whom checked the box for being enrolled in a course or program with the USBE, took part with 35 receiving the CSR related scenario and 36 receiving the corporate ability related scenario, as the amount of the students currently in the lecture hall was not counted the answer frequency cannot be displayed. The demographic data of the respondents can be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( N_{tot} = 71 )</th>
<th>( N% )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23–27</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28–32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR related</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA related</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: demographic

5.1 Assumptions

In order to analyse quantitative data there are some assumptions which have to hold true for the vast majority of analytical methods, one of those being normality in the distribution meaning that ‘the data values for each quantitative variable should also be normally distributed, being clustered around the variable’s mean in a symmetrical pattern forming a bell-shaped frequency distribution’ (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 533). Additionally, the cases should be independent meaning that selecting one case does not exclude another
case from being selected, the data should be numerical, and the variances in the population should be equal (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 533). Having these assumptions holding true, it is possible to move onto the next phase, testing the internal reliability.

5.2 Internal reliability

When having multiple items accumulate a score which is then used to determine the value of a variable, there is always the risk of one or more of those items not relating to the same thing, causing them to lack coherence or even identifying something entirely else (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p 158). Measuring the internal reliability can be done through several different methods, but the most widely used and accepted method today, when dealing with normally distributed samples, is Cronbach's alpha (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 451). Being a split-half method, it calculates the average possible split-half reliability coefficients to form a number between 1, the highest possible reliability and in reality, impossible to achieve, and 0 which indicates no coherence at all between the items (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 159). Regarding which values are acceptable, Saunders et al. (2016, p. 451) argue that values of 0.7 or above indicate that the same thing is being measures by the combining of items. However, at times the internal reliability may not be satisfactory if the threshold is set at 0.7, one such case was with Moss et al. (1998, p. 178) whom in their study argued that a value of 0.6 or above should also be satisfactory. Setting the threshold at 0.6 would come to prove useful as at first attempt the pre-scenario values for Cronbach's alpha were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cronbach's alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product evaluation</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate evaluation</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 - initial reliability

While the value for purchase intention is acceptable the one for corporate evaluation would not have been with its 0.68 if the threshold suggested by Saunders et al. (2016, p. 451) were used, but as 0.6 now was the set threshold a value of 0.68 is deemed acceptable. Product evaluation faced problems though, as can be seen in the table, but could be mended by removing item number two, the question regarding the consistency in Ben & Jerry's product quality. A notion as to why was given by a peer who suggested it was an unclear statement for some as 'most likely thought of it as a mass-produced product and thus it should be the same every time while others viewed it as an ambiguous statement and therefore put a three'. When deleting the item, the value rose to 6.2 with 7.3 possible if item number three was removed from the Product evaluation construct, but was 6.2 is above the accepted threshold item number three was kept.
As for the post-crisis constructs, their values were all satisfactory, especially Product evaluation's which for consistency had its number two removed as well. The result from the analysis are displayed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cronbach's alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product evaluation</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate evaluation</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3 - revised reliability*

### 5.3 Descriptive statistics

Large amounts of data could be incomprehensible and hardly fill any function if presented as it is, therefore as a help both for the reader and the researcher it is recommended to use descriptive statistics to explain variable and its contrasts while presenting it in tables or graphs (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 527).

As mentioned in the section regarding the pilot study questions regarding the respondents view of the realism and severity of the crisis were asked. It was also repeated in the main questionnaire to check if the scenarios were viewed as equally plausible and realistic, with the following result when CSR was compared to corporate ability:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>CSR</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significance (p = 0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realism</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4 - Scenario check*

Moving on with the constructs the average values, or mean values, for the product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention for the 71 respondents towards the chosen brand before being exposed to the scenario is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product evaluation</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate evaluation</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5 - combined means*

In the test between the ones who received the CSR related scenario and those who received the corporate ability related scenario was the to be carried out, one of the most important steps in doing that is to determine that the groups have comparable pre-scenario values, or in other words that there is no statistical difference between the groups. When comparing two groups' means to see if the probability for their means to be different is down to chance alone, it is appropriate to conduct an independent groups t-test (Saunders
et al., 2012, p. 542, 543). After conducting an independent groups t-test on product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention with type of questionnaire as the grouping variable with corporate ability being compared to CSR, the following (rounded) results were found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>CSR group mean</th>
<th>CA group mean</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significant (p= 0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product evaluation</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>No (0.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate evaluation</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>No (0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>No (0.62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 - Independent groups t-test

As there is no statistical evidence for the groups being anything else but comparable, they are deemed comparable for the purpose of measuring the impact of different types of reputational scandal on the respondents.

5.4 Hypothesis testing

The first hypothesis for each dimension of consumer based brand equity begged the question if the reputational crisis had a negative impact at all. To measure this a paired t-test was utilized. Paired t-tests are used when numerical data for two variables which measure the same feature but under different conditions to find if the condition had an impact, by Saunders et al. (2016, p. 543) exemplified by measuring work performance before and after counselling the employee. To test the hypothesis the same significance level as when comparing the respondents receiving the CSR and corporate ability questionnaires, p = 0.05, was utilized. The results are displayed in the table on the next page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significant (p = 0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groups combined</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product evaluation</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>Yes (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate evaluation</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>Yes (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>Yes (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CSR group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product evaluation</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>Yes (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate evaluation</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>Yes (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>Yes (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CA group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product evaluation</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>Yes (0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate evaluation</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>No (0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Yes (0.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 - paired t-test

From the table above we can see that there is statistical evidence for product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention being lowered when the respondent was faced with a CSR related crisis. As expected, the corporate ability group did not display a significant decrease in corporate evaluation after being exposed to the corporate ability related scenario, therefore being in line with the only hypothesis not predicting a negative impact (number 4). With all other relationships being significant, or in other words the reputational crisis had a significant negative impact, the hypotheses 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8 are kept.

When testing hypothesis 3, 6, and 9 the difference between the magnitude of the negative impact had to be measured. This was once again done by using an independent groups t-test where the type of questionnaire acted as the grouping variable. The test variable then became the difference between product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention before and after being exposed to the scenario. The result when the mean difference in the CSR group is compared to the mean difference in the corporate ability group are as follows:
As the only significant relationship was that of Corporate evaluation being decreased more with those in the CSR group than with those in the corporate ability group, one out of the three remaining hypotheses has to be discarded. While hypothesis 6 and 9 predicted the outcome from the independent group t-test, hypothesis number 3 predict the corporate ability group having a significantly more negative decrease than those in the CSR group and therefore has to be discarded.

The total result of the hypothesis testing is displayed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H (1)</td>
<td>CA related reputational crises have a negative effect on Product Evaluation.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (2)</td>
<td>CSR related reputational crises have a negative effect on product evaluation.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (3)</td>
<td>A CA related reputational crisis has a larger impact upon Product Evaluation than a CSR related reputational crisis.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (4)</td>
<td>CA related reputational crises have no negative effect on corporate evaluation.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (5)</td>
<td>CSR related reputational crises have a negative effect on corporate evaluation.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (6)</td>
<td>CSR related reputational crises have a larger negative effect on corporate evaluation than CA related reputational crisis.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (7)</td>
<td>CA related reputational crises have a negative effect on purchase intention.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (8)</td>
<td>CSR related reputational crises have a negative effect on purchase intention.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (9)</td>
<td>CA and CSR related reputational crises negative impact is equal to each other’s.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 - independent groups t-test mean difference

Table 9 - Support & not supported hypotheses
5.5 Revised conceptual model

In the revised conceptual model, we can see that H3 had to be discarded, as a Corporate ability related reputational crisis was not proven to have a larger negative impact on product evaluation than a CSR related one would. Other than that, the conceptual model is unchanged from figure 1 with all other hypotheses proven.
6 Discussion

This chapter I go through the different variables and their separate related discussion before moving on to general discussion regarding the chosen method.

6.1 Product evaluation

The respondents held a high level of pre-scenario product evaluation to the particular brand, with the mean at 3.9, which is hardly surprising as the brand is commonly seen as a great choice when shopping for ice-cream for one or two people, possibly why it is highly regarded among students. The variable did face issues with the internal reliability, barely scraping past the accepted threshold when an item was removed. This came as a surprise as all the items stemmed from the same original source and were utilized by Yoo & Donthu (2001, p. 14) as a pair or in collaboration with others (Yoo et al., 2000, p. 203) in their research and had their reliability proven in their respective studies. As hypothesized, product evaluation would decrease in times of a reputational crisis, as proven by the t-value for the CSR related scenario group in the before and after paired t-test being at 5.38 and the value for the corporate ability related scenario group being at 7.23 and when not separated by groups having the combined t-value of 8.89. This hardly comes as a surprise as it echoes the views of previous researchers who saw a reputational crisis as an event which definitely will decrease the consumer's evaluation of the corporation's offerings (Kim, 2014; Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sohn & Lariscy, 2014). But unlike the hypothesized result, the effect from a corporate ability related reputational crisis was not significantly larger than that of a CSR related crisis. A possible explanation for this could be the removal of item number 2, 'I believe Ben & Jerry's products are of the same quality at every time of purchase', which did not meet the reliability criteria and therefore had to be discarded which could have been a major influence in the subsequent construct. Park & Lee (2013 p. 214, 215) stated that when the melamine scandal erupted in China back in 2008 the consumers grew suspicious of the company and its products but also of dairy products as a whole with loss of credibility and prompted consumers to choose other products. Following that string of logic, the corporate ability related scenario, which was an adaption of the Chinese melamine incident, should have had a similar effect on the respondents view of quality consistency. Conversely, this line of reasoning is somewhat quashed if the other items are examined. Out of the three remaining one deals with the perceived product quality, another with the innovativeness, and the last item (number 4) deals with consistency in stating 'I believe I will be satisfied next time I buy Ben & Jerry's'. Viewing their corporate ability related before and after values the ones which varied the most were the first two, having a t-value of 5.81 and 6.67 respectively while the last item's t-value was 5.42. Being the lowest of the three, it signals that the respondents’ view of the overall quality and innovativeness was lowered more so than their view of the consistency.

However, as Fornerio & d'Hauteville (2010, p. 40) theorized, even with low level commitment products the consumer may emphasize brand attributes more so than product attributes, but with the emphasising increasing with in scale with the level of social involvement, an involvement which depends on identifying with the brand. Accordingly, if their theorising holds true, someone whom have a staunch stand to not identify with a
brand which does harm to others their evaluation of the product should be affected by their evaluations of the corporate or brand. But, as Fornerio & d’Hauteville (2010, p. 41) points out, brands with high levels of social involvement where the consumer's evaluations of the brand or corporation would go so far as to effect product evaluation as well are usually those producing luxury products or products to be kept for an extensive time. Ice cream hardly belongs to those categories, partly why the brand was chosen, and another reason why the result lack of significant difference between the groups is perplexing.

6.2 Corporate evaluation

As with product evaluation, the respondents held a fairly high level of pre-scenario corporate evaluation with the mean of both groups at 3.4. Unlike product evaluation there were no immediate issues regarding the internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.68, possibly due to the items being from only two studies instead of three as with product evaluation.

By observing a significant decrease or corporate evaluation as a result of a CSR related crisis but not in the case of a corporate ability related confirmed two out of the three corporate evaluation related hypotheses as the CSR related scenario group had a t-value of 9.21 and the corporate ability related scenario group a value of 1.52. What springs to mind is that if the t-value for the CSR related group results in a significant decrease while the corporate ability related groups is not, the third corporate evaluation hypothesis should be supported as well, and it is with its t-value of 5.46 making it the only difference in decrease to be significantly greater than its counterpart. The results are thus in line with research on corporate evaluation in reputational crises, corporate ability related ones being more forgivable or easier to attribute to other factors which does not incriminate the corporation to a larger extent (Kim, 2014, p. 159, 160). A point should also be made about the findings of Lin et al. (2011, p. 464) as, similarly to their results, this study found those with previous positive or non-negative views of the corporation not wavering significantly in their evaluations due to production issues. Instead the focus lay with the CSR related scenario group as corporate evaluation could have been significantly decreased for varying reasons, separate or combined. In the theoretic background chapter, it was shown that CSR is a deciding factor in consumer's trust in a consumer's evaluation of the corporation, with trust being one of the deciding factors (Kang & Hustvedt, 2014; Romani et al, 2013), or as mentioned in the discussion around product evaluation, evaluation could come from social identification, identification which occurs if the corporate or brand is evaluated as desirable (Fornerio & d’Hauteville, 2010, p. 40). Additionally, consumer's which have higher levels of altruism, which is common in the modern western world, will seek out brands which display altruistic values throughout their philanthropist work (Vlachos, 2012, p. 1573), which offers the explaining that the respondents were reacting to a brand which did not express values which correlated to their own (plausible) altruistic values and therefore saw a significant decrease in corporate evaluation.
6.3 Purchase intention

As seen in the data analysis chapter, the purchase intention construct yielded the lowest pre-scenario mean of them all with 3.1, signalling a neutral attitude to purchasing the particular brand. This is not unexpected as the brand is fairly high-priced and the participants being students the intuitive thought it that their limited economy hinder their ability to purchase, hence their neutral purchase intention. But in contrast to their low initial mean, the internal reliability for purchase intention was the highest of all with a value of 0.75. While all three of the constructs were expected to have high values, the one for purchase intention came the closest to the expectations, expectations which were grounded in the fact that purchase intention is a commonly tested variable and should then have met a high level of standardization in their items and with three out of four being from the same authors who in their research had high values on Cronbach’s alpha (Lin et al., 2011, p. 467).

As hypothesised, both the corporate ability related scenario and the CSR related scenario would decrease the purchase intention among the respondents. Because of this we are going to take a closer look at the separate items and their values. In general, item 1, 3, and 4 faced the largest decrease with t-values of 4.77, 6.28, and 7.43 respectively with item number 2 only having a value of 1.21. Item number 2, as can be seen in the appendix, is regarding the willingness to try new products launched by the brand, the item also had the lowest pre-scenario mean with only 2.57. This leads to one of two conclusions; asking the respondent regarding their willingness to try new products by a brand is not an appropriate measure regarding purchase intention, or the respondents in this case were contended with the range of products currently available. The former seems more plausible as it coincides with the third product evaluation item, ‘I believe Ben & Jerry’s produces innovative products’, which intuitively should coincide with the desire to try new products. Additionally, items number 2 was the lowest mean with a hefty margin with the mean of 2.37 as compared with the second lowest at 2.92 (item number 3) or the highest at 3.76 (item number 4). The difference in the items aside, the cause of lost purchase intention, as authors including Castalado et al (2010, p. 660) and Singh et al. (2010, p. 544) could likely be traced to one of the fundamental components of purchase intention; trust. Once again, the discussion from Fornerio & d’Hauteville (2010, p. 40) regarding the consumer’s tendency to identify with corporations that match their altruistic values would in extension affect their purchase intention, which explains the reduced purchase intention from the CSR related scenario. With the corporate ability related scenario, the explanation is provided partly by the argumentation by Lin et al. (2011, p. 460), with faith in the corporation ability to produce acceptable or high quality goods causing consumers to seek out other alternatives, or by Custance et al. (2012, p. 29) who cited general distrust towards the brand responsible and in a lesser extent the whole domestic industry as the source of dwindling market shares in favour of foreign brands. In extension, the respondents whom had a lowered purchase intention toward a foreign brand should then have had an increased purchase intention towards a domestic brand.

Looking at the third hypothesis, that the corporate ability related scenario and the CSR related would have equally negative effects on purchase intention, the hypothesis held true with a t-value of 1.02 indicating that there is no significant difference between the groups. As shown in the theory chapter, there are no indicators that the one would have a bigger impact than the other, a notion that was emulated in the results with both means being very close to each other at 2.66 for the corporate ability group and 2.63 for the CSR group. Instead, it is possible that the real impact from the different types of reputational
crises will be noticeable over a longer period of time. As described in the theory chapter, Sohn & Lariscy (2014, p. 36) found the variables in their research (Attitude, satisfaction trust, commitment, and loyalty) to be recovering at a much slower pace when exposed to a CSR related crisis than when exposed a corporate ability related crisis.

6.4 General discussion

This study used a method in which the participant is asked to answer questions regarding their product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention, subsequently being exposed to the scenario of their group before being asked to answer the questions regarding the three variables again. As discussed in the ‘pilot study’ section, this method is not without its inherit problems. It was noted by the researcher that during the data collection, some participants would flip back and forth in their questionnaires, presumably in order to have their answers in the post-crisis constructs compared or in line with the ones given in the pre-scenario constructs. If that would be the case it would be an issue as the goal of this study was to survey the impact of a corporate ability and CSR related reputational crisis and thus having the participant checking their previous answer before answering the post-scenario questions. On the other hand, it could be the flipping back and forth was due to the participant giving a rapid answer in the pre-scenario constructs and, realizing the point of them, wishing to see the answers in order to make sure their post-scenario answers were lower than the previous ones to make sure to display their contempt with the scenario. This is however only speculation and since an open question in the questionnaire where the participant could write down any comments was not included there is no way of knowing the participants’ thoughts on the matter or their reason for flipping back and forth.

As noted in the theory chapter and in the discussion regarding purchase intention, consumers’ attitudes towards a brand in a reputational crisis are likely to recover in different paces depending on the nature of the crisis (Sohn & Lariscy, 2014, p. 36; Lin et al., 2011, p. 464). Which makes the use of a pre-incident and post-incident measurement, with the scenario functioning as the incident, at the same point in time potentially rather lacking as some of the effects are more enduring than others. Conversely, the use of a measurement at the time of exposure to the incident (scenario) gives us an insight to the participant’s immediate reaction.
7 Conclusions

This chapter contains the general conclusions regarding the study, followed by theoretical contributions and a discussion regarding practical contributions before being finished by limitations and future research.

7.1 General conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the different magnitudes of CSR and Corporate ability reputational crises had on consumer based brand equity, or to be more precis on product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention. The research question, ‘Does CSR transgression related reputational crises cause as much damage as Corporate Ability reputational crises in terms of consumer based brand equity?’ was answered through quantitative analysis with scenarios taken from incidents which have involved actual corporations which were tried with another, unrelated brand serving as the manipulating factor. From the analysis, an answer to the question could be derived were, as opposed to expectations, product evaluation was negatively affected but not by significantly different magnitudes, corporate evaluation in line with expectations was only affected negatively by a CSR related reputational crisis, and purchase intention, also in line with expectations, was affected negatively by both a CSR and corporate ability related crisis.

7.2 Theoretical contributions

This study set out on the basis of Aaker’s (1991, 1996), and later Aaker & Joachimstahler’s (2000), work on consumer based brand equity to see its changes during a reputational crisis, which was conceptualized into two by Brown & Dacin (1997). By combining the fields of brand crisis management and consumer based equity in a way which is different from the commonly researched angles of post-crisis management, with Greyser (2009) or the earlier referred Samaraweera et al. (2014) being prominent figures, and pre-crisis factors which mitigate the damage sustained, with Rea et al. (2014) and the earlier referred Kim (2014) being prominent figures, a rather unique study has been conducted. The study has contributed by showing a negative relationship between a CSR related reputational crisis and product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention when measured immediately after exposure to the reputational crisis, in this case the scenario. The study also contributed by showing a negative relationship between a corporate ability related reputational crisis and product evaluation and purchase intention. But the most important contribution, and the purpose of the study, was the displayed significantly larger impact by a CSR related reputational crisis on corporate evaluation when compared to a corporate ability related one, a result which was hinted at throughout the literature with most authors describing a CSR related reputational crisis being more severe, in part due to the breaching of trust (Kang & Hustvedt, 2014) or shattering of identification with the particular brand (Lin et al, 2011).
7.3 Practical contributions

When it comes to practical contributions, this study could be seen as quite cynical with the research question concerning which of Corporate ability or CSR has the largest impact, suggesting that if manager has to choose the manager will have an idea of which one is the least harmful. As seen in the results, the most harmful one to a corporation would be a CSR related one as it affected all of the three used variables negatively, while a reputational crisis related to corporate ability only affected two of the used variables negatively. However, the practical contribution from this conclusion is not the cynical ‘If you have to choose, choose something regarding corporate ability’ but rather that a manager should be extra vary of not risking being involved in a CSR related reputational crisis, possibly even take extra steps to mitigate a future one. But in order to fully understand the extent of this, other variables have to be included for mitigating the effect of an occurred event or preventing damage of a possible future crisis. As many of the studies mentioned throughout this thesis have mentioned, positive associations regarding a corporation’s corporate ability would decrease the impact of a corporate ability related crisis (Lin et al., 2011, p. 458) or how positive associations regarding CSR would give the consumer a more forgiving attitude during a CSR related crisis (Klein & Dawar, 2004, p. 204). But ultimately, the focus of efforts regarding corporate ability or CSR should be determined by their respective relevance (Kim, 2014, p. 168).

7.4 Limitations and future research

While being rather unique in its nature, this study is not without short comings. The first I would like to point out is what has been discussed already, and that is the location and subsequent target population. Generalization issues with the sampling technique aside, which will be discussed in the next chapter, having a target population containing only students in the close vicinity to Umeå limits the applicability of the results by geographical, income, and age factors to mention a few. All of these are likely to influence the participant’s reaction or attitude and thus could even be used as a future descriptive variable. Accordingly, with another target population a sampling method with better ability to generalize to the whole population should be utilized.

The use of Ben & Jerry’s, being a dairy product which most consumers can afford, had its limitations as well. While being appropriate for this particular study there are likely other product categories which have a larger personal involvement for the consumer, such as luxury products (Fornerio & d’Hauteville, 2010, p. 40) or cars (Nayeem & Casidy, 2013, p. 736), and thus negative/positive associations would play a larger role than they did with Ben & Jerry’s. Furthermore, it is hazardous to make any conclusions regarding the results of a product apply to another product, even within the same category, at least if you agree with the reasoning of Van Heerde el al. After conducting research on a reputational crisis’ effect on different dimension of purchase intention in the short term and the long term, their use of the 96’ salmonella outbreak in Kraft Foods’ peanut butter yielded results but they also issue words of caution of how applicable those results truly were to, in their example, a bottled water producer in USA (Van Heerde et al., 2007, p. 235, 243). Accordingly, future research could benefit from including a wider range of products or brands which produce a wider range, for example ICA’s own products or IKEA. Furthermore, a future study could include the aspect of the corporation’s primary
image focus as the exact same incident may affect corporations differently, with a practical example being the Foxconn incidents where workers committing and threatening suicide due to horrendous working conditions primarily caused public backlash against one of their customers, Apple (Moore, 2012), while Apple’s arguably biggest competitors in respective businesses, Microsoft and Samsung, were featured less frequently despite also having Foxconn as a supplier (Beall, 2016).

On a second note regarding the structure, in this study only product evaluation, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention were used but brand loyalty, the remainder of Aaker & Joachimstahler’s (2000) dimensions, brand loyalty, was not used and should in future research be included, as brand loyalty is a possible deciding factor in having consumers stay with a brand instead of switching to a currently ‘better’ brand (Reydet & Carsana, 2017, p. 133). By including this, the future researcher would also be able to better draw conclusions regarding the consumers’ rational attitudes, avoiding a brand because of its protentional negative aspects, and affective attitudes, avoiding a brand because it does not ‘feel right’.

As a final note on the regarding the structure and continuation on the discussion regarding the use of scenarios, there are plenty of marketing research being done on which brands are most trustworthy or held in high regards, with the list by Forbes (Strauss, 2017) who utilizes data from Reputation Institute being one of many. But as mentioned earlier, reputational crises are events waiting to happen, and it therefore not unlikely that one of those listed as reputable today will be in a crisis. A possible angle is to map the impact those have on the corporations involved and survey the difference in the impact depending on the sort of crisis. While extensive and much out of the researcher control, it would probably yield in research that is as close as possible to reality.
8 Truth Criteria

The intention is to enhance the quality of the quantitative research by evaluating it using a set of truth criteria. When conducting business research there are three main areas the researcher has to work with: reliability, validity, and replicability (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 41). Each of these are discussed in their own section.

8.1 Reliability

The first area, reliability, is described as the plausibility that the same result would be achieved if the research would be conducted again, or if the result has been the outcome of different specific circumstances or by chance. In other words, reliability describes how reliable the study is and, the ever so important issue, if the phenomenon to be measured is measured correctly (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 169-170). Additionally, there are three factors to be considered to evaluate the study's reliability: stability, internal reliability, and inter-observer consistency (Bryman & Bell, 2011 p. 157). The first factor, stability, is concerned with the study's result and how it, if stable, should not diverge over time if the means of measurement is stable enough which may be known through various ways, one of which is through a test-retest where the study's measurements are reused in a later context to view the results fluctuations over time with less fluctuation indicating high stability and higher fluctuation indicating low stability (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 157-158). As this is, to be best of my knowledge, the first study utilizing this particular set of measurements for the particular purpose with the particular scenarios, doing a test-retest with previous research is hardly possible and the scope of time for this study does not allow of it either. The stability is therefore ambiguous, but to allow for future test-retests to determine stability the steps taken, measurements used, and scenarios described have been displayed.

The internal reliability involves if the specific indicators, in this case the items in the questionnaire, on which the measurement, the constructs, is based on are coherent, relate to the same thing, and vary in similar patterns, if they do they can be considered to be reliable (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 158). This topic has been handled earlier in both Practical method and Data analysis. The threshold for acceptable values on the chosen method, Cronbach's alpha, was indeed lowered to accommodate for the combined constructs and after moderation the constructs were to be considered reliable.

The inter-observer consistency concerns how well the categorization of data corresponds between researchers and is most prominent as a reliability measure when open ended questions or structured observations are involved (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 157-158). As this questionnaire did not involve any open ended questions the inter-observer consistency was not considered in the evaluation.
8.2 Validity

Probably the most important of the truth criteria, validity concerns the conclusion which have been drawn from the study and if they are interrelated, or in other words if the measurements measure what is to be measured (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 159). While there are several measures of validity, including face, concurrent, predictive, construct, and convergent (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 160), the ones relevant for this study are the face validity and construct validity. Face validity holds true if the researcher has chosen to develop a new measurement and thus, prompted by wondering if the measurement actually could measure what is to be measured, consults peers to see if the measurement is feasible, making face validity a very intuitive measurement (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 160). This form of validity has been sought to be achieved by consulting with my peers regarding the scenarios and the constructs themselves, as displayed in the section regarding the pilot study. With the adjustments made from the resulting discussion and all the items being adopted or adapted from other researchers, the face validity could be deemed feasible, if not high.

The construct validity concerns the variables used and hypotheses posed being in line with the measurements intend to use, or conversely if the measurements and variables used are able to answer the hypotheses deducted from theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 160). The hypotheses in this study are all the result of a thorough literature search among theories on corporate ability, corporate social responsibility, consumers' evaluation and other fields were the views of different authors have been considered. The same authors have in many of the cases also been the source of the measurements used there has been very little straying from the core subjects and thus the construct validity could be deemed fairly high.

8.3 Replicability

Replicability could be seen as the availability of conducting the same research at another point in time, possibly by another researcher who replicate and/or improve upon the previously conducted research, by which imposing a certain level of objectivity to both researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 165). While research is seldom truly replicated (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 41), enabling it is an important step in showing the researchers objectivity and non-bias. The argument for replicability in this study is that by using previously tested items, albeit in a new construct, a certain degree of replicability has been achieved. However, the use of a convenience sample reduces this degree of replicability as the respondents are impossible to gather for another participation and the results are hardly generalizable. But in the end, the exact same research could be carried out, albeit with new respondents in a similar sample, and thus the replicability could be deemed fairly high.

8.4 Generalizability
Generalizability is to what extent the results from a study could be generalized to other groups or situation than the one being surveyed (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 43). As discussed earlier throughout this study, the use of a convenience sample reduces the generalizability severely. The reason for which being the limited time and funds to conduct a proper probability sampling method for the whole population as the number of students enrolled in a course or program at USBE measure in the thousands. While a probability sampling method is the kind from which representative samples are generally assumed to be much more likely to come from, it would also require the whole population to be available for quantification and numbering (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 176), an extensive task with administrating the questionnaire being even more extensive in terms of effort, time, and resources. Furthermore, as discussed in the limitations and future research, the use of a particular product limits the generalizability as well since the results of this study only truly concern ice cream and applicability of these results onto other consumable products is therefore questionable, if we follow the reasoning of Van Heerde et al. (2007, p. 243). I therefore reiterate that the circumstances prompted the chosen method, with the unfortunate outcome being a result which is low in generalizability.
9 References


10 Appendix 1 – Corporate ability related questionnaire

Enkät gällande attityd till företag

Tack för att du deltar i den här undersökningen. Poängen med den här enkäten är att mäta attityder till ett större företag i olika situationer, den väntras ta 4-7 minuter att genomföra. Som deltagare är du helt anonym och deltagande är fullkomligt frivilligt.

Önskar du mer information kring studien eller resultaten är du välkommen att kontakta mig.

Tack på förhand
Johan Palmquist, palmquist.johan@gmail.com

*Obligatorisk

Demografiska frågor

1. Jag identifierar mig som. *
   Markera endast en oval.
   ☐ Man
   ☐ Kvinna
   ☐ Annat

2. Hur gammal är du? *
   Markera endast en oval.
   ☐ 18-22
   ☐ 23-27
   ☐ 28-32
   ☐ 33+

Frågor kring företaget

Ben & Jerry’s är en av de populäraste glassförsäljarna i Sverige och en av de populäraste varlden över. Nedan kommer du få besvara några frågor gällande din syn på företaget och dess produkter. Vänligen svara med hjälp av skalan där 1 betyder att du inte alls håller med och 5 att du håller med fullständigt, 3 betyder att du ställer dig neutral.

3. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry’s säljer produkter av hög kvalité
   Markera endast en oval.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

4. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry’s produkter är av samma kvalité vid varje köpstillfälle
   Markera endast en oval.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1en530It60C-5w1xxv6QpxjO1SuaL3UBxIv1Tk1KXZVtL3Y/edit
5. Ben & Jerry's producerar innovativa produkter
   Markera endast en siffra.
   
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6. Om jag köper Ben & Jerry's kommer jag mest troligt bli nöjd
   Markera endast en siffra.
   
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7. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's erbjuder prisvärda produkter (mycket för pengarna)
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8. Jag tror att Ben & Jerry's sköter sitt företag väl
   Markera endast en siffra.
   
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9. Jag tror att Ben & Jerry's, i genomsnitt, anställer mer kompetent personal än deras konkurrenter
   Markera endast en siffra.
   
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10. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's är ett trovärdigt varumärke
    Markera endast en siffra.
    
    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    |---|---|---|---|---|
    |   |   |   |   | Håller med fullständigt |

11. Nästa gång jag köper glass kommer jag troligen köpa Ben & Jerry's
    Markera endast en siffra.
    
    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    |---|---|---|---|---|
    |   |   |   |   | Håller med fullständigt |
12. Om Ben & Jerry's lanserar en ny produkt tänker jag testa den
Markera endast en oval.

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| Håller inte alls med | | | | | Håller med fullständigt

13. Jag kommer att köpa Ben & Jerry's inom snart framtid
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14. Om en van frågar skulle jag rekommendera Ben & Jerry's
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| Håller inte alls med | | | | | Håller med fullständigt

Föreställ dig följande...

För att minska kostnader i produktionen och förbättra näringsvärdena för att möta EU-regler har vissa av Ben & Jerry's fabrikar systematiskt använt sig av melamin, ett ämne som annars främst används i tillverkningen av hårdplast. Till följd av detta har fall av sjukdomar relaterade till melaminforgiftning blivit känt och alla ansvariga vid de specifika fabrikerna blivit avskedade med ytterligare påföljder troliga.

Med detta i åtanke, och oberoende av föregående frågor, ombeds du svara på följande frågor

15. Skulle det beskrivna scenariot kunna inträffa i verkligheten?
Markera endast en oval.

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| Nej, sådant händer aldrig | | | | | Ja, liknande säker händer ständigt

16. Hur allvarligt anser du det beskrivna scenariot vara?
Markera endast en oval.

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| Inte alls särskilt allvarligt | | | | | Väldigt allvarligt

17. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's säljer produkter av hög kvalité
Markera endast en oval.

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| Håller inte alls med | | | | | Håller med fullständigt

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1enSZlC6ecCJmlJAwT5pJY9-aJxIjUBzMKtKkiEK7vLxjE/edit
18. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's produkter är av samma kvalité vid varje köptillfälle  
*Markera endast en oval.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Håller inte alll med | Håller med fullstängt 
---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------

19. Ben & Jerry's producerar innovativa produkter  
*Markera endast en oval.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Håller inte alll med | Håller med fullstängt 
---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------

20. Om jag köper Ben & Jerry's kommer jag mest troligt bli nöjd  
*Markera endast en oval.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Håller inte alll med | Håller med fullstängt 
---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------

21. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's erbjuder prisvärda produkter (mycket för pengarna)  
*Markera endast en oval.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Håller inte alll med | Håller med fullstängt 
---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------

22. Jag tror att Ben & Jerry's sköter sitt företag väl  
*Markera endast en oval.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Håller inte alll med | Håller med fullstängt 
---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------

23. Jag tror att Ben & Jerry's, i genomsnitt, anställer mer kompetent personal än deras konkurrenter  
*Markera endast en oval.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Håller inte alll med | Håller med fullstängt 
---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------

24. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's är ett trovärdigt varumärke  
*Markera endast en oval.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Håller inte alll med | Håller med fullstängt 
---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1enJ5Z26C0reC3jM1lAe4pJYV8=ua_julBE5wTikEK7wXyE/edit
25. Nästa gång jag köper glass kommer jag troligen köpa Ben & Jerry's
   Markera endast en oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

26. Om Ben & Jerry's lanserar en ny produkt tänker jag testa den
   Markera endast en oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

27. Jag kommer att köpa Ben & Jerry's inom snart framtid
   Markera endast en oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

28. Om en vän frågar skulle jag rekommendera Ben & Jerry's
   Markera endast en oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

Tillhandahåll av Google Forms

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1mZ3OC6ewCJtmjAw4uJ1V9s-ua_lUIBEKcTk1=E7wLjyj6/edit


11 Appendix 2 – CSR related questionnaire

Enkät gällande attityd till företag

Tack för att du deltar i den här undersökningen. Polingen med den här enkäten är att mäta attityder till ett stort företag i olika situationer, den vintas ta 4-7 minuter att genomföra. Som deltagare är du helt anonym och deltagande är fullkomligt frittvilligt.

Onskar du mer information kring studien eller resultaten är du välkommen att kontakta mig.

Tack på förhand
Johan Palmquist, palmquist.johan@gmail.com

*Obligatorisk

Demografiska frågor

1. Jag identifierar mig som.. *
   Markera endast en oval.
   □ Man
   □ Kvinnan
   □ Annat

2. Hur gammal är du? *
   Markera endast en oval.
   □ 18-22
   □ 23-27
   □ 28-32
   □ 33+

Frågor kring företaget

Ben & Jerry's är en av de populäraste glassförsäljarna i Sverige och en av de populäraste varorna över. Nedan kommer du få besvara några frågor gällande din syn på företaget och dess produkter. Vårdagen svara med hjälp av skalan där 1 betyder att du inte alls håller med och 5 att du håller med fullständigt, 3 betyder att du håller dig neutral.

3. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's säljer produkter av hög kvalité
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5

   □ Håller inte alls med
   □ □ □ □ □ □ Håller med fullständigt

4. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's produkter är av samma kvalité vid varje köpstillfälle
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5

   □ Håller inte alls med
   □ □ □ □ □ □ Håller med fullständigt

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1OOhUE6eJevfUj0gIo32n6GT3scReo5EtpcO8Wb_N1VaM-kG/d/
5. Ben & Jerry’s producerar innovativa produkter
   Markera endast en oval.

   1  2  3  4  5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

6. Om jag köper Ben & Jerry’s kommer jag mest troligt bli nöjd
   Markera endast en oval.

   1  2  3  4  5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

7. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry’s erbjuder prisvärd produkter (mycket för pengarna)
   Markera endast en oval.

   1  2  3  4  5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

8. Jag tror att Ben & Jerry’s sköter sitt företag väl
   Markera endast en oval.

   1  2  3  4  5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

9. Jag tror att Ben & Jerry’s, i genomsnitt, anställer mer kompetent personal än deras konkurrenter
   Markera endast en oval.

   1  2  3  4  5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

10. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry’s är ett trovärdigt varumärke
    Markera endast en oval.

    1  2  3  4  5
    Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

11. Nästa gång jag köper glass kommer jag troligen köpa Ben & Jerry’s
    Markera endast en oval.

    1  2  3  4  5
    Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt
12. Om Ben & Jerry’s lanserar en ny produkt tänker jag testa den
Markera endast en oval.

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13. Jag kommer att köpa Ben & Jerry’s inom snar framtid
Markera endast en oval.

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14. Om en vän frågar skulle jag rekommendera Ben & Jerry’s
Markera endast en oval.

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Föreställ dig följande...
De senaste åren har Ben & Jerry’s expanderat kraftigt och har därför behov av nya produktionsfaciliteter och metoder för att möta efterfrågan. Till följd av detta har områdena kring deras fabriker blivit kraftig förorenade med bland annat obrukta dricksvatten och skada på närbelägna åkrar.

Med detta i åtanke, och oberoende av föregående frågor, ombeds du svara på följande frågor.

15. Skulle det beskrivna scenariot kunna inträffa i verkligheten?
Markera endast en oval.

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16. Hur allvarligt anser du det beskrivna scenariot vara?
Markera endast en oval.

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17. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry’s säljer produkter av hög kvalité
Markera endast en oval.

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18. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's produkter är av samma kvalité vid varje köptillfälle  
Markera endast en oval.

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19. Ben & Jerry's producerar innovativa produkter  
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20. Om jag köper Ben & Jerry's kommer jag mest troligt bli nöjd  
Markera endast en oval.

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21. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's erbjuder prisvärda produkter (mycket för pengarna)  
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22. Jag tror att Ben & Jerry's sköter sitt företag väl  
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23. Jag tror att Ben & Jerry's, i genomsnitt, anställer mer kompetent personal än deras konkurrenter  
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24. Jag anser att Ben & Jerry's är ett trovärdigt varumärke  
Markera endast en oval.

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25. Nästa gång jag köper glass kommer jag troligen köpa Ben & Jerry’s
   Markera endast en oval.
   1 2 3 4 5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

26. Om Ben & Jerry’s lanserar en ny produkt tänker jag testa den
   Markera endast en oval.
   1 2 3 4 5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

27. Jag kommer att köpa Ben & Jerry’s inom snar framtid
   Markera endast en oval.
   1 2 3 4 5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

28. Om en vän frågar skulle jag rekommendera Ben & Jerry’s
   Markera endast en oval.
   1 2 3 4 5
   Håller inte alls med ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Håller med fullständigt

Tillhandahåll av
Google Forms
12 Appendix 3 – Corporate ability related questionnaire (English)

Survey regarding attitudes towards a corporation

Thank you for participating in this study. The goal of this survey is to measure consumer attitudes towards a larger corporation in different scenarios, it is estimated to take 4-7 minutes to do. As a participant you are completely anonymous and participation is voluntary.

If you wish to know more regarding the study or its results, you are welcome to contact me.

Thank you in advance
Johan Palmquist, palmquist.johan@gmail.com

*Obligatory

Demographic questions

1. I identify as a... *
   - Man
   - Woman
   - Other

2. How old are you? *
   - 18-22
   - 23-27
   - 28-32
   - 33+

Questions regarding the corporation

Ben & Jerry's is one of the most popular ice-cream brands in Sweden and one of the most popular in the world. Below you will be asked to answer questions regarding your view of the corporation and its products. Please answer along the scale where 1 means you do not agree at all and 5 means you agree completely. 3 means you are neutral.

3. I believe Ben & Jerry's sell high quality products
   - Markera endast en oval.
   - Do not agree at all
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Agree completely

4. I believe Ben & Jerry's products' quality is consistent
   - Markera endast en oval.
   - Do not agree at all
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Agree completely

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15N7G-T4kRncpq7S0wdLzyRR6/3avgl_yf91m1fthvFbdc/edit
5. Ben & Jerry’s produce innovative products  
Markera endast en oval.

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6. If I buy Ben & Jerry’s, I will most likely be satisfied  
Markera endast en oval.

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7. I believe Ben & Jerry’s offer affordable products (great value for the price)  
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8. I believe Ben & Jerry’s manage their corporation well  
Markera endast en oval.

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9. I believe Ben & Jerry’s, on average, hire more competent personnel than their competitors  
Markera endast en oval.

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10. I believe Ben & Jerry’s is a trustworthy brand  
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11. Next time I buy ice-cream, I will probably buy Ben & Jerry’s  
Markera endast en oval.

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12. If Ben & Jerry’s launch a new product, I will try it
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely

13. I will buy Ben & Jerry’s in the near future
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely

14. If a friend asks, I would recommend Ben & Jerry’s
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely

Imagine the following...
To reduce costs in production and enhance the nutritional values in order to meet EU-regulation, some of the Ben & Jerry's production facilities have been using melamine, a material primarily used in producing hard plastics. As a consequence, cases of diseases related to the ingestion of melamine have been reported among consumers, with people in management positions being fired and additional reprimands likely to follow as a consequence.

With this in mind, and unrelated to previous section, please answer the following questions.

15. Could the described scenario happen in reality?
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
No, such things never happen ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, such things happen all the time

16. How severe do you consider the scenario to be?
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
It is nothing serious ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very serious

17. I believe Ben & Jerry’s sell high quality products
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely
18. I believe Ben & Jerry's products' quality is consistent
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely ☐

19. Ben & Jerry's produce innovative products
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely ☐

20. If I buy Ben & Jerry's, I will most likely be satisfied
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely ☐

21. I believe Ben & Jerry's offer affordable products (great value for the price)
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely ☐

22. I believe Ben & Jerry's manage their corporation well
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely ☐

23. I believe Ben & Jerry's, on average, hire more competent personnel than their competitors
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely ☐

24. I believe Ben & Jerry's is a trustworthy brand
Markera endast en oval.

1 2 3 4 5
Do not agree at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree completely ☐
25. Next time I buy ice-cream, I will probably buy Ben & Jerry's
Markera endast en oval.

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26. If Ben & Jerry's launch a new product, I will try it
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27. I will buy Ben & Jerry's in the near future
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28. If a friend asks, I would recommend Ben & Jerry's
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<td>Do not agree at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree completely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4 – CSR related questionnaire (English)

Survey regarding attitudes towards a corporation

Thank you for participating in this study. The goal of this survey is to measure consumer attitudes towards a larger corporation in different scenarios. It is estimated to take 4-7 minutes to do. As a participant, you are completely anonymous and participation is voluntary.

If you wish to know more regarding the study or its results, you are welcome to contact me.

Thank you in advance
Johan Palmquist: palmquist.johan@gmail.com

*Obligatorisk

Demographic questions

1. I identify as a... *
   Markera endast en oval.
   - Man
   - Woman
   - Other

2. How old are you? *
   Markera endast en oval.
   - 18-22
   - 23-27
   - 28-32
   - 33+

Questions regarding the corporation

Ben & Jerry’s is one of the most popular ice-cream brands in Sweden and one of the most popular in the world. Below you will be asked to answer questions regarding your view of the corporation and its products. Please answer along the scale where 1 means you do not agree at all and 5 means you agree completely. 3 means you are neutral.

3. I believe Ben & Jerry’s sell high quality products
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5
   Do not agree at all   Agree completely

4. I believe Ben & Jerry’s products’ quality is consistent
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5
   Do not agree at all   Agree completely

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1n0zc88wYH_l6byjKc16jPCpPtvKvQnO9k3o2Z2F668/edit
5. Ben & Jerry’s produce innovative products
   Markera endast en oval.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   Do not agree at all |   |   |   |   | Agree completely |

6. If I buy Ben & Jerry’s, I will most likely be satisfied
   Markera endast en oval.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   Do not agree at all |   |   |   |   | Agree completely |

7. I believe Ben & Jerry’s offer affordable products (great value for the price)
   Markera endast en oval.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   Do not agree at all |   |   |   |   | Agree completely |

8. I believe Ben & Jerry’s manage their corporation well
   Markera endast en oval.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   Do not agree at all |   |   |   |   | Agree completely |

9. I believe Ben & Jerry’s, on average, hire more competent personnel than their competitors
   Markera endast en oval.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   Do not agree at all |   |   |   |   | Agree completely |

10. I believe Ben & Jerry’s is a trustworthy brand
    Markera endast en oval.
    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    |---|---|---|---|---|
    Do not agree at all |   |   |   |   | Agree completely |

11. Next time I buy ice-cream, I will probably buy Ben & Jerry’s
    Markera endast en oval.
    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
    |---|---|---|---|---|
    Do not agree at all |   |   |   |   | Agree completely |

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1m0xB3wYi_l6Vvy7Kc16jyPChpLjWQiKQ9k2O2F3d/edit
12. If Ben & Jerry's launch a new product, I will try it
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5
   Do not agree at all □ □ □ □ □ Agree completely □ □ □ □ □

13. I will buy Ben & Jerry's in the near future
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5
   Do not agree at all □ □ □ □ □ Agree completely □ □ □ □ □

14. If a friend asks, I would recommend Ben & Jerry's
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5
   Do not agree at all □ □ □ □ □ Agree completely □ □ □ □ □

Imagine the following...
Ben & Jerry's have been expanding rapidly in the latter years and have been in need of new production facilities and methods to meet the demand. As a consequence, the area surrounding their factories have been heavily polluted with undrinkable water and ruined fields as a result.

With this in mind, and unrelated to previous section, please answer the following questions.

15. Could the described scenario happen in reality?
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5
   No, such things never happen □ □ □ □ □ Yes, such things happen all the time □ □ □ □ □

16. How severe do you consider the scenario to be?
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5
   It is nothing serious □ □ □ □ □ Very serious □ □ □ □ □

17. I believe Ben & Jerry's sell high quality products
   Markera endast en oval.

   1 2 3 4 5
   Do not agree at all □ □ □ □ □ Agree completely □ □ □ □ □
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. I believe Ben &amp; Jerry's products quality is consistent</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markera endast en oval.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Ben &amp; Jerry’s produce innovative products</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markera endast en oval.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20. If I buy Ben &amp; Jerry’s, I will most likely be satisfied</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markera endast en oval.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>21. I believe Ben &amp; Jerry’s offer affordable products (great value for the price)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. I believe Ben &amp; Jerry’s manage their corporation well</td>
<td>1-5</td>
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<td>23. I believe Ben &amp; Jerry’s, on average, hire more competent personnel than their competitors</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Markera endast en oval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. I believe Ben &amp; Jerry’s is a trustworthy brand</td>
<td>1-5</td>
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https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1n10dB3wYHt6hvy7Kc16fPCpJtwQKvkQWb2OZ2F5b/edit
25. **Next time I buy ice-cream, I will probably buy Ben & Jerry's**
   
   *Markera endast en oval.*
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Agree completely</td>
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</table>
   
26. **If Ben & Jerry's launch a new product, I will try it**
   
   *Markera endast en oval.*
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Do not agree at all</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agree completely</td>
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</table>
   
27. **I will buy Ben & Jerry's in the near future**
   
   *Markera endast en oval.*
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>
   
28. **If a friend asks, I would recommend Ben & Jerry's**
   
   *Markera endast en oval.*
   
<table>
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14 Appendix 5 – Table of constructs

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<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item (as seen in section 2)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aaker, 1996, p. 118</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Yoo et al., 2000, p. 203</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Yoo &amp; Donthu, 2001, p. 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate evaluation</td>
<td>7, 8, &amp; 9</td>
<td>Berens et al., 2005, p. 46</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lin et al., 2011, p. 467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>11, 12, &amp; 14</td>
<td>Lin et al., 2011, p. 467</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kang &amp; Hustvedt, 2014, p. 258</td>
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</tbody>
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